



Wilmette Park District **Board Brief**

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

Gillson Park Topics

Disc Golf Proposal

A popular subject at the February 9 meeting, was the discussion of disc golf at Gillson Park. Numerous emails and communication were received both for and against a new disc golf course. Commissioner Murdock proposed that the board consider other possible locations when deciding whether or not to install the amenity. Commissioner Goebel followed up that the disc golf idea could be just the start of untapped amenities and resources that we could begin planning throughout the community. Commissioner Abbott weighed in that “we aren’t done collecting public comment on this topic, and there is definitely a movement in the community that wants disc golf.”

Gillson Comprehensive Plan Updates

Things are moving along for the Gillson Comprehensive Plan. At the February 9 meeting, Executive Direct Steve Wilson reported that stakeholder meetings had been held at the end of January with various members of the beaches, U.S. Coast Guard, local neighbors and garden clubs to collect input from community members closely impacted by changes at Gillson Park.

Following up these meetings, project consultants (The Lakota Group) are holding a virtual open house on February 18 for all community members to learn about the project and provide feedback. “We want to keep the process moving and we want to hear from the public at large,” said Wilson. “After the virtual open house, the initial results of the community input will be presented to the board, and next steps will be taken in the development process.”

Lakefront Committee Topics

Sailing Beach Fees

In the Public Comment section of the February 9 meeting, a patron expressed concerns about the increase in sailing and beach membership fees. Commissioner Abbott addressed these concerns while reporting on the Lakefront Committee, stating that the increase in fees was a concern of his as



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well. Commissioner Anderson commented, “We should have done a better job with communication regarding the fees both internally and externally, but at the end of the day, the logic behind the fees stands.”

Langdon Beach Bluff Protection

Concern was expressed at the February 9 meeting, regarding planning for the Langdon bluff protection project. Commissioner Abbott explained that little progress had been made with The SmithGroup since their initial proposal. Commissioner Murdock commented, “I hope that we will take a really close look at the fees, this is a tremendous amount of money and if we can’t get comfortable I’d like to discuss alternative options.”

To advance the progress of the project, Commissioner Shissler suggested that The SmithGroup attend the March Lakefront Committee Meeting to answer direct questions regarding their proposal. Commissioner Abbott proposed that the March Lakefront Committee Meeting be held as a committee of the whole meeting – the other commissioners agreed.

Parks & Rec. Committee Topics

Amenities at Community Playfields

At the February 9 meeting, Commissioner Murdock updated the board that staff have begun narrowing options concerning two key amenities for Community Playfields – the fitness path and restrooms. “This has been a very long process but we are trying to put as much information out there to balance the needs of the folks who live very close to the park with the needs of the community as a whole,” said Murdock.

Regarding the path, Park District staff have creatively conceptualized three loops ranging from a half-mile to a full mile in length. There are challenges to meeting the goal of a full mile loop, and staff are reviewing the options. They are anticipating having a final recommendation for the board at the March meeting.

Staff came up with 9 potential locations for the proposed restrooms, and discussions with District 39 suggest that the junior high restrooms may also be accessible to the public.

New Dog Park Locations

Progress was reported by Commissioner Murdock at the February 9 meeting, with regards to proposed locations for two new dog parks in Wilmette. A western location is being discussed at West Park; however, the land is technically Glenview property, therefore the committee is going through the regulatory process to get approval from our neighboring village.

Another dog park in central Wilmette is being considered at either Mallinckrodt or Howard Park. Staff have identified concerns and challenges for both options, and are finalizing proposals with anticipation to have a recommendation for the board in March.

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Commissioner

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While it has not yet been determined how the new dog parks will be regulated, Executive Director Wilson clarified that the county requires that all dog parks be regulated to ensure patrons' dogs have all necessary shots, and the best way to do this would be to require a permit. Commissioner Abbott stressed that the board aim for compliance and keep any associated fees to a minimum.

Recreational Programming in Tier 4

At the February 9 meeting, Commissioner Murdock briefly updated that recreational programming is doing very well with the recent transition from Tier 3 to Tier 4. There have been over 1,000 winter programming enrollments with highlights including Platform Tennis lesson revenue increasing by 132%; Gymnastics classes are “bursting at the seams” with 700 participants; and the Center Fitness Club increased to 50% capacity.

Golf Operations Committee Report

Commissioner Wolfe reported at the February 9 meeting that all of the recent snow has been terrific for the cross-country ski trails. Trails are groomed, open and seeing plenty of use as folks are looking for ways to get outside and enjoy some fresh air.

Wolfe also reported that initial expectations for the golf cart path project were not met by the contractor due to insufficient work crews. The drainage portion of the project has been completed, and planners are striving to have the project completed in time for the 2021 golf season to begin. “We are hoping to complete the project by the end of April,” said Wolfe.

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, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings are being held virtually until further notice. Meetings will be available on Channel 6 locally for Comcast subscribers, as well as available on our shared YouTube channel with the Village of Wilmette. *Please check our [website](#) for updates.*

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