



Wilmette Park District **Board Brief**

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

Public Comment Clarifies Details for Gillson

At the July 12 meeting, members of the public expressed concerns over the Gillson Comprehensive Plan regarding previous “proposals,” separate renovations for the Lakeview Center and the suggestion of increased parking and parking spaces.

In response, President Murdock provided clarification to these points:

- Murdock advised that plan submissions are not an accurate characterization of what happened at that meeting. He stated he would describe it as a brain storming session and that the Consultants were not prepared to present plans at that point.
- President Murdock advised that from his perspective, those were not plans but a number of ideas that were presented. Those concepts were not vetted fully by the staff or the Board.
- Since that meeting, the Commissioners have identified specific elements of those ideas that none of them support such as two-way traffic on Overlook Drive or on Harbor Drive.
- He asked the public to be patient with the Board as the community input process was challenging during the pandemic and that the Board is striving to reach out to the community and gain additional input.
- Commissioner Shissler agreed with President Murdock and noted his frustration at some of the concepts presented by the consultants but that those concepts were just a starting point for conversation.
- President Murdock acknowledged the Board has not reached any consensus on what they would like to do at this point.

Vice President Goebel provided explanation that, while the Gillson Comprehensive Plan will encompass the pedestrian and street traffic, as well as wayfinding aspects surrounding Lakeview Center and Wallace Bowl, specific facility upgrades and renovations would require meticulous attention and will thus be a separate plan.

Concerns over parking were addressed by Commissioner Duffy, who explained that increased parking was only one of many options provided by designers to spark ideas and conversation on the needs of Gillson Park. “The overall intent of the plan is the landscaping and beautification of the park,” he said, mentioning overgrowth, dying trees, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and a need to bring the overall park up to standard.



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Updates from the Lakefront Committee

Vice President Goebel reported on the Lakefront Committee at the July 12 meeting. Multiple projects are in the works for the Lakefront, starting with the Langdon Shoreline Protection Proposal. Discussions were held at this month's committee meeting, but no immediate action was taken on this project.

Renovation concepts for the Lakeview Center were reviewed, with options narrowed into 3 tiers of scale and budget. A particular focus is on the lower level of the facility and expanding the potential use of the space.

The Gillson Comprehensive Plan was featured in the Lakefront Committee Report. Goebel noted increased efforts to gather public feedback, as well as to share up-to-date information on the state of the project and analysis feedback.

- The community engagement survey can be accessed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TDKK8SV>
- The Community Open House will be held on July 27 from 6-8 P.M., at the Community Recreation Center, room 106 (3000 Glenview Rd., Wilmette)
- Representatives are planning to have booths at upcoming Wilmette French Markets east of the Metra station.
- A future survey will be shared once more concrete plans are developed using public feedback to narrow down the options.

Looking Forward to Capital Improvements at Golf

At the July 12 meeting, Commissioner Shissler briefly recapped the discussion of multiple capital improvement projects being considered at the Wilmette Golf Club. Such ideas included updating the driving range, expanding the patio, possible fire pits on the patio, and installing another dividing wall within the restaurant.

Progress for Community Playfields, Keay Nature Center & More

Commissioner Duffy reported at the July 12 meeting that staff and the Parks & Recreation Committee have chosen to focus on Location B for the new Community Playfields restrooms. The committee has deferred voting on this decision until water pump relocation, building design and cost data could be gathered.

The pond at Keay Nature Center has been repaired for a fraction of the projected costs. President Murdock expressed his gratitude to Superintendent Solberg and staff, for their research and actions to address the issue.

With the pond no longer leaking, the next project will be the path improvement in 2022. "We are going to move forward with the improvement of Keay Nature Center in steps," explained Duffy.

Discussed at the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting were the topics of disc golf and garden plots. The committee is exploring interest in disc golf and the possibility of installing sites at different parks with minimal impact on

neighbors. Staff are also looking to ease the waitlist for garden plots and are considering adding additional plots to meet demand.

Plans and Goals for Centennial and Facilities

At the July 12 meeting, President Murdock recapped the discussions from the Centennial Committee meeting beginning with the topic of pickleball and potentially adding courts to existing facilities. “There is a survey that has gone out to residents with 396 surveys completed to date,” said Murdock. Initial data suggests a significant interest in the sport and demand for a facility. Most current players are beginners, and those who do not play pointed to the need for a convenient location. Based off survey response, the locations of interest would be Centennial and West Park.

The capital improvement to expand the deck at the paddle hut is being revisited. The project had been budgeted for 2020, but was put off due to the pandemic.

Additional goals for the committee include planning far in advance for the renovation of the Centennial Family Aquatics Center, as well as short-term plans to improve the deck space, event space and storage space for visitors.

Goals and Accomplishments from the Financial Planning & Policy Committee

Commissioner Clarke outlined the goals put forth by the Financial Planning & Policy Committee, at the July 12 meeting. These goals ranged from updating policies and agency manuals, to investigation of grant opportunities.

Clarke shared that the district revenue and expense statement shows revenue outpacing budget projections at this time. The Community Recreation Center roof project is coming in under budget. Electric car charging stations have been ordered and will be installed at the Community Recreation Center, West Park and Wilmette Golf Club – with an additional station ordered by the Village to be installed at Village Hall.

Good News from the Executive Director’s Report

Director Wilson had good news to share at the July 12 meeting, starting with a recap of the successful July 3 festivities. Between the Yankee Doodle Dash 5K, and the Fun & Fireworks event in the evening, the Independence Day Celebration received a great deal of support, participation and positive feedback. “While the park district takes the lead on the public facing part of the event, none of this is possible without the Village of Wilmette Police, Fire & Public Works,” said Wilson, “they were amazing to work with, we had a very short timeframe to get a plan together and mitigate the impact of not having Pace Buses, and they did a spectacular job to set us up for success.”

Unfinished Business regarding Committees and Park Board

At the July 12 meeting, commissioner Clarke proposed that committees each draft out their assigned roles and responsibilities for review by the board to be

ultimately published on the park district website. These explanations are intended to clarify for residents which committee to turn to for certain questions and concerns. Committees agreed to develop these summaries in the near future for review.

A discussion was also held for the Park Board to clarify formalities and processes should a vacancy arise on the board. It was explained that under current agency process the vacancy would be posted, applications would be received and interviews held. The remaining park board would then vote on the applicants and a majority vote would elect the replacement commissioner.

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, August 9 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, as well as available on our shared YouTube channel with the Village of Wilmette.

Please check our [website](#) for updates.

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