



Wilmette Park District **Board Brief**

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

Public Comment

The Public Comment segment of the September 13 meeting presented a variety of topics from members of the public. Questions were asked regarding possible revisions to the Village Stormwater IGA. President Murdock explained that some revisions were being discussed to allow for more flexibility in the way the money will be spent at the specific three sites, as well as adding a time limit to the spending of the funds as it was previously open-ended. Commissioner Duffy summarized, “To your point, why didn’t this come up in a board meeting, it’s because the details are being put together between the (village and park district) staffs and the board will vote on it once the agreement has been written.”

Attention was directed to Community Playfields briefly as a member of the public asked when the landscaping discussions and planning would commence for public input. Commissioner Duffy explained, “Once we have something back from the consultants it will be taken to the Parks and Rec Committee meeting for discussion.” Staff confirmed they anticipate plans and concepts to be ready within the next two months.

Discussions Continue in Lakefront and Golf Committees

Brief updates were provided for both the Lakefront and Golf Committees. Director Wilson provided the Lakefront Committee Report. The Lakefront Committee spent time reviewing the response of the public input process around the Lakeview Center Renovation Project. This included the results of the survey, the outcomes of the open houses and discussions with members of the community. Wilson closed his report by highlighting that the beach and rentals have had a very busy season at Gillson Park.

Commissioner Duffy reported as acting chairman of the Golf Operations Committee. Small improvements were discussed at the committee meeting, but the highlight was the anticipated completion of the Golf Cart Project.



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Construction will continue when the course closes on October 4.

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Parks and Rec. Committee Report

At the September 13 meeting, Commissioner Duffy reported that programs are doing well with a full season of camps, a vibrant preschool program and after school programs just beginning. The Center Fitness Club is planning to run outdoor group fitness classes, gymnastics is doing very well nearly meeting their capacity, and Mallinckrodt is thriving with a number of rental events and plans to begin hosting day trips and outings in the Fall. Duffy also mentioned that the topic of disc golf and garden plots has been postponed until next year. “Park District staff are going to perform a Facilities Assessment next year, analyzing the programming at Centennial and seeing if we need to expand the programming in any way,” explained Duffy, “once we have an idea of that, we can readdress disc golf and expanding garden plots.”

Progress for Community Playfield Restrooms

Two noteworthy milestones were reached at the September 13 meeting regarding improvements at Community Playfields. Commissioner Duffy explained that with the selected location for the bathrooms, there were two decisions to be made: firstly, the location of the pump station; and secondly, the size of the restroom.

After explaining both the benefits and the significant cost to move the pump station behind the restroom structure, Commissioner Duffy suggested, “Moving the pump is a more expensive proposition, but it is what the community is calling for, so the committee is recommending that the board accept this location as proposed.”

Regarding the restroom structure size, it was proposed that the structure be designed to support 6 picnic tables rather than the original 4, allowing for greater use of the space for classes, camps, private rentals and other group activities. President Murdock commented, “it would be worth mentioning that this has been a long and arduous process having these discussions, and I think this really was an example of the board, the staff and the community working together.” The increased size of the restroom and the location of the pump behind the structure were approved.

Centennial Committee Report

President Murdock reported on the Centennial Committee at the September 13 meeting. Discussions surrounded the staff’s development of an overall plan for how activities at West Park could grow and fit together in the same space. Between platform tennis, pickleball, the playground and garden plots, there is a need for a future plan at West Park. “This was a great introduction because over the past few months we’ve been talking mostly about pickleball and how it could fit in at West Park, and seeing how it all looks together was very helpful.”

It was also reported that the demand for paddle tennis continues to exceed capacity restraints. “We are hoping to be able to expand the paddle courts next year to capture that additional revenue and to meet the needs of a number of

residents who want to play and who aren't able to," said Murdock.

Financial Planning and Policy Committee

Commissioner Clarke reported on the Financial Planning and Policy Committee at the September 13 meeting. She discussed the anticipation of inflation to be higher than previous years, and the district's plan to increase budget and fees in proportion to the projections. "Generally the districts numbers are in a good position financially," said Clarke, "we expect to finish 2021 with a healthy surplus."

A Word from the Executive Director

At the September 13 meeting, Director Wilson briefly touched on a few subjects, starting with the timeline for next steps in the Gillson Comprehensive Plan. "We expect to hear from the Consultants with updated concepts at a committee of the whole meeting tentatively scheduled for September 27," said Wilson.

There were seven applicants for the vacant commissioner seat, and the board has decided to hold in-person interviews of each applicant.

The park board voted to approve the Maple Avenue Storm Sewer Easement Agreement between the Village of Wilmette and the NWRD. This agreement renews the lease of the storm sewer pipe that runs underneath Canal Shores.

Fitness Path Bid Approved for Community Playfields

The September 13 meeting reached one more milestone for the Community Playfields improvements. After a bidding process for the one-mile fitness path, park district staff and project engineers recommended the lowest bid, which came in below the cost estimate. The bid was accepted and approved by the board.

Commissioner Frazier asked when the project would begin, and Superintendent Solberg confirmed that construction is set to begin at the end of September and is a 4-6-week project.

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, October 18 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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