

**MINUTES OF THE
MARKETING COMMITTEE
OF THE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT
JULY 20, 2017
6:30 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

Board Members Present: Commissioner & Committee Chairman Khemarey Khoeun
Vice-President Mike Reid

Others Present: Executive Director/Secretary John V. Ohrlund
Superintendent of Recreation and Facilities Michelle Tuft
Marketing Manager Jim Bottorff

Absent: President Susan Aberman
Commissioner Michael W. Alter
Commissioner Maureen Yanes

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairman Khemarey Khoeun called the Marketing Committee meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 6:03 p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING COMMENTS

Chairman Khoeun called on Marketing Manager Jim Bottorff, to summarize the District's marketing operation, and answer questions during and after the presentation. Mr. Bottorff thanked the Board and also (in their absence) thanked his marketing team, Scott Walker and Rachel Pozner (graphic designers), who he noted possess skill sets that go far beyond their graphics duties, offering the District a wide-range of in-house marketing assets.

PUBLICATIONS

Mr. Bottorff noted that his department produces 89 publications annually and discussed the continued success of the seasonal program guide series, Skokie residents' preferred vehicle for finding District information. He then discussed the Skatium Seasonal Guides, mailed to a 15,000 home mail list, noting that Skatium staff concur that the direct marketing piece has been a great help in filling both figure skating and hockey programs over the past seven years. Mr. Bottorff said that an annual Pool Guide is now direct mailed to 8,000 Evanston and North Chicago homes, similar to the District's three-times yearly Golf Guide. He also discussed the annual Camp and Summer Fun Guides, both mailed to all 25,000 Skokie homes. Mr. Bottorff also discussed the District's new Fall School Year Fun Guide for all residents of Skokie. Finally, he discussed Fitness First's *Get Fit Gazette*, Emily Oaks' *Listening Post*, the Museum's *Bell Tower*, *TLC Today*, and the SPD E-news, the later sent 10 times annually, including extra editions for golf, The Exploritorium, pools, the Skatium, and Fitness First. Vice-President Reid commented that he reads the e-news routinely.

DISTRICT WEBSITES

Mr. Bottorff explained the strategy behind the District's website, discussing the District's annual

update philosophy, as well as commenting that the site has become obsolete, with a new site currently being built. He mentioned that the department maintains the site on a daily basis. He also said that the marketing department's Scott Walker has learned to build new adaptable sites from scratch, with the goal of constructing new sites for Scream Scene and Skokie's Backlot Bash this fiscal year. Mr. Bottorff also discussed the new and unique looking Exploritorium web site. Mr. Bottorff mentioned that the Spring Greening website is now in possession of the District and will work on updating it (a department goal) by the first of the year.

NEW SPD WEBSITE

Mr. Bottorff discussed another marketing goal, the construction of the new District website. After staff spent more than a year researching and planning for the site, the construction kickoff meeting with developer AmericanEagle.com was held on July 7. The site will be more dynamic, with an open design, will be responsive (with the elimination of a separate mobile site) and will utilize a homepage Mega Menu for easier navigation. The site will also feature the addition of Program pages with live online registration class feeds on each Program page, and enhanced Facility pages with information tabs. The Event Calendar will be enhanced with a variety of filters, and District staff will be trained by marketing staff (another marketing goal this year) on a new backend content management system. Marketing will also create a new internal system to ensure web information is up-to-date and accurate, another fiscal year goal. Chairman Khoeun asked if the marketing department had obtained user information prior to creating a plan. Mr. Bottorff said that staff had talked to several web companies, conducted resident and staff focus groups, and hired a research company to conduct online analysis of user behaviors on the current site.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Mr. Bottorff said that the department utilizes Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Instagram many times per week and credited Rachel Pozner with managing the District's 16 social media sites (pages). The department also collects District photos on its Flickr page, sometimes using them in publications, after obtaining permission. Mr. Bottorff also commented that, per the marketing department's fiscal year goals, Pozner is also running new Facebook "ads," as well as posting Facebook "events."

'GRASS ROOTS' ADVERTISING

Mr. Bottorff discussed in-house advertising such as posters, fliers, bulletin boards and more. He said that the graphics team develops and places internal ads throughout the District. He also talked about the District's video monitors and cross marketing special events and revenue facilities at Oakton, Weber, Devonshire and the Skatium. He discussed the Outdoor Message Boards, and the new Edens billboard, explaining that, while the board was a huge unintended plus for District marketing, its use will be limited to events and facilities that draw a regional audience. Bottorff also mentioned the department's writing and editing of all marketing pieces (speeches, website copy, ad copy, poster and flier copy, award applications, etc.), the creation of news releases and news stories, and the website's 360 degree indoor photos taken in 2015. Vice-President Reid noted that he had seen the tours.

PHOTOS

Mr. Bottorff discussed SPD photography, adding that programmers, Flickr users, marketing staff, and a professional photographer all take needed photos for marketing pieces.

PRINT ADVERTISING

Mr. Bottorff discussed advertising in the *Pioneer Press*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Reader*, *Chicago Parent*, *Golf Time Magazine*, *Kohl's Museum Guide*, and *Chicago Athlete*, among many others. Vice-President Reid also commented that he liked radio ads for Sports Park he heard on WSCR-AM 670.

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

Committee Chairman Khoeun asked about a language component for the website. Mr. Bottorff noted that the plan was to incorporate an online Google translator application, and that while not as accurate as others language applications, it provided many more language options, a crucial need for Skokie residents. Khoeun also asked about other diversity initiatives as they relate to marketing. Mr. Bottorff said that he also sits on the staff diversity committee and will be injecting marketing ideas into diversity initiatives and implementing diversity ideas into marketing initiatives. Superintendent Tuft said that District staff was currently very diverse and would be utilized to work with customers of all types, including providing language services. Khoeun also asked about creating apps in conjunction with the website. There was discussion among all attendees regarding other park district apps. Bottorff said that if a need for a new app was found after the website build, the marketing department would research and develop it, specifically mentioning a possible need for a league standings and weather app. He also commented that the District does not want to embark on adding apps unless a need or great fit for them can be found. The attendees, having discussed and offered ideas in the various areas of marketing throughout the meeting, offered no more questions or comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Executive Director Ohrlund thanked Mr. Bottorff for his presentation and the other attendees for their input. Chairman Khoeun adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Susan Aberman
President

John V. Ohrlund
Secretary