

**MINUTES OF THE  
MARKETING COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
MARCH 23, 2015  
6:30 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present:      President Mike Reid  
  Commissioner Maureen Yanes

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

Absent:                         Vice President Susan Aberman  
  Commissioner Michael W. Alter  
  Commissioner Jerry Clarito

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner and Committee Chairman Maureen Yanes called the Marketing Committee meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 6:30 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN'S OPENING COMMENTS**

Chairman Yanes 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 87 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 market piece is directly responsible for filling both figure skating and hockey programs over the past five years. Mr. Bottorff said that a new annual Pool Guide will be 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 intent to create a new School Year Fun Guide in September 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, sent 10 times annually, including extra editions for golf, The Exploritorium, pools, the Skatium, and Fitness First. Commissioners Reid and Yanes, and Director Ohrlund commented that they read 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 showing attendees the latest design and operational updates. He mentioned that the department maintains the site on a daily basis. He also said that the marketing department's Scott Walker has recently learned to build new adaptable sites from scratch, constructing new such sites for Scream Scene, Skokie's Backlot Bash, and Skokie's Festival of Cultures. Mr. Bottorff also showed attendees the District's new mobile device website, a stripped down, easier to view and use version of the current site, for cell phones, tablets, etc. Superintendent Tuft showed both commissioners the site on her mobile phone. Mr. Bottorff also discussed the desktop and mobile sites' new alert crawl, a feature used for special events and weather (and other) emergency announcements. Mr. Bottorff also indicated that the department would be constructing a new Exploritorium web site in 2015-16. Chairman Yanes asked why the Exploritorium was

chosen. Mr. Bottorff and Superintendent Tuft discussed the uniqueness of the venue as a regional attraction, with competitors that utilize their own standalone web sites.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Mr. Bottorff said that the department creates Facebook posts and Twitter “tweets” many times per week and credited Rachel Pozner with managing the District’s 16 social media sites (pages), districtwide. The department also collects District photos on its Flickr page, sometimes using them in publications, after obtaining permission.

### **‘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 direct marketing of postcards and brochures, discussing the upcoming Teen Trip postcard. 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, the department’s writing and editing of all marketing pieces (speeches, website copy, ad copy, poster and flier copy, award applications, etc.) and the creation of news releases and news stories.

### **PHOTOS**

Mr. Bottorff showed attendees the District’s new 360<sup>o</sup> indoor photo tours tied to Google maps, placed on web pages for Emily Oaks Nature Center, the Museum, The Exploritorium, the Skatium Ice Arena, and Fitness First. He said that similar outdoor shoots should be complete and online by August for the golf course, Sports Park, Skokie Water Playground, and Emily Oaks Nature Center. Mr. Bottorff discussed SPD photography, adding that programmers, Flickr users, marketing staff, and a professional photographer all take needed photos for marketing pieces. President Reid noted that he had seen the tours and that they might serve the public when looking for facility rentals.

### **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*. He noted that with the purchase of Pioneer by the *Chicago Tribune*, the District has now lost its ability to run paid stories in the Skokie Review’s online edition.

### **CONFERENCES & IDEAS**

Mr. Bottorff discussed his department’s intention to learn more about and pursue targeted Facebook advertising, a takeaway from a seminar at national conference. He also noted that an idea obtained from that same seminar spurred discussions leading to the addition of the annual Pool Guide. The group discussed a golf open house targeted to cultural groups and the possibility of piggybacking on the Village’s Clean Green program, maybe with an exercise component.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The attendees having discussed and offered ideas in the various areas of marketing throughout the meeting, there were no more questions or comments. Executive Director Ohrlund thanked Mr. Bottorff for his presentation and the other attendees for their input. Chairman Yanes adjourned the marketing committee meeting at 7:26 p.m.

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Michael Reid  
President

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John V. Ohrlund  
Secretary