



**MINUTES OF THE
DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
OF THE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**
Oakton Community Center
4701 Oakton Street, Skokie, IL 60076
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

Board Members Present: Commissioner/Chair Maureen Yanes
Commissioner Khemarey Khoen

Staff Present: Executive Director John Ohrlund
Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Jon Marquardt
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

Public Present: Sochenda Keo
Wendy Kaplan
Beth Dostert
Joseph Tamraz
Dipak Jhaver
Satish and Mira Chander
Pramod Shah
Tsai-Fen Lin
Thida Lock
Anwar Had

CALL TO ORDER

Advisory Council Chairman Maureen Yanes called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Commissioner Yanes thanked everyone for coming. There were a lot of new faces and Commissioner Yanes asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

BOARD UPDATES

Commissioner Yanes said at the last meeting it was suggested by the Council to request the Park Board to consider reviewing the Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values of the Park District. Executive Director Ohrlund said this will be a topic of discussion on the October Board Agenda.

The minutes of the Diversity Advisory Council Meeting of August 8, 2017 were approved at the September Board meeting and previously distributed.

Commissioner Yanes said she attended the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conference recently with staff and commissioners. She said a common thread throughout the conference sessions was diversity. She said the consensus was to provide access and opportunities for everyone, relationships should be built with all and hold regular meetings to discuss issues and ideas. We should do things through an “equity lens,” trying to see things through other people’s perspectives.

Commissioner Khoeun said the conference was a good networking experience. Commissioner Khoeun said the NRPA three pillars of fitness and wellness, social equity and conservation really stood out. She said the importance of role models helps the younger generation and encourages participation. Executive Director Ohrlund said he has attended many NRPA conferences and diversity has become a major trend in educational sessions. Assistant Superintendent Marquardt said it was interesting to see how other communities handle diversity. One of the ideas presented was to create a cultural calendar to celebrate different cultures each month with activities like dance and cooking.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AND COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As mentioned by Commissioner Khoeun social equity is one of the pillars of the NRPA. Commissioner Yanes said social equity is a term used to address diversity. It relates more to values and respect for people rather than equality. Commissioner Khoeun showed an image of equity vs. equality and explained the image. See attached. Commissioner Yanes asked everyone what they thought “equity” meant. Some of the comments were: fairness, inclusiveness, identifying people’s needs, and making sure everyone can participate in programs and activities regardless of financial background.

Mr. Satish Chander said in Skokie everyone works together citing events like Coming Together and the Festival of Cultures, celebrating different cultures. Mr. Chander said his understanding of the Park District is that it manages all the parks in the community but doesn’t know much more about the Park District. He said the Park District needs to reach out more to the community as many people are not aware of the programs and activities available. He suggested putting the magic word “free” in the marketing materials and people will come.

Mr. Joseph Tamraz said he felt the Skokie community gets people involved with special events like Festival of Cultures and Coming Together. He feels events need to be promoted more. Commissioner Khoeun said Skokie is a welcoming community offering many programs and opportunities and said promoting these activities is needed.

Ms. Beth Dostert said the Skokie Library uses concepts from the Harwood Institute to invite community members for conversations about their aspirations for the Skokie community.

Mr. Pramod Shah said when community services are promoted some people miss out because of language barriers. He said the Village of Skokie has materials printed

indifferent languages. Mr. Marquardt said he is working on various ways to reach out to people speaking different languages through translators and printed materials.

Mr. Shah said the Village has welcome packages for new residents. In the News Skokie newsletter the Skokie Library, Skokie Schools and Park District activities are featured.

Mr. Tamraz said information should be provided to community organizations and businesses to distribute in newspapers and communicate on the radio. Commissioner Khoeun suggested a Village map to identify the different communities. Ms. Kaplan said she sees the Park District as instrumental in getting the information to the public.

Ms. Kaplan said Skokie Theatre has much programming for ethnicity as diversity is part of their mission. Ms. Kaplan said the Skokie Theatre is introducing a DiverStory program on the first Saturday of the month to introduce all holidays and explain how they impact different ethnicities. Ms. Kaplan said she can distribute community event information at the Theatre.

Executive Director Ohrlund discussed the possibility of creating a community bulletin board as part of the Park District website. It would need to be filtered and have guidelines. Mr. Marquardt said an open house for community groups is being planned to showcase all of the Park District facilities.

Executive Director Ohrlund said he is very proud of the Park District staff. Through the three main special events: Festival of Cultures, Fourth of July Parade and Fireworks and Backlot Bash community entities work together to make it enjoyable for people to live, work and play.

It was suggested to get input and fresh thoughts from Niles West and Niles North High students. Commissioner Khoeun believes additional marketing and communication strategies to reach various groups is needed. Commissioner Yanes asked for ideas or comments to be emailed to her prior to the next Diversity Advisory Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Maureen Yanes adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Maureen Yanes, Commissioner

John Ohrlund, Executive Director

Vision Statement

The Skokie Park District envisions a community where all of its residents enjoy a high quality of life through leisure time pursuits, beautiful open spaces, and first rate facilities.

Mission Statement

The Skokie Park District will realize its vision through teamwork, community partnerships, sound fiscal management, and creativity in every area of its operation.

Core Values

The Skokie Park District will fulfill its mission through:

- Commitment● Integrity● Innovation● Service ●Openness ●Environmental Stewardship