



**MINUTES OF THE OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARING ON SENECA PARK LAND SWAP WITH LUBAVITCH CHABAD  
DEVONSHIRE CULTURAL CENTER  
4400 GREENWOOD AVENUE, SKOKIE, IL  
JUNE 21, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present: President Susan Aberman  
Vice-President Mike Reid  
Commissioner Mary Oshana

Others Present: Executive Director/Secretary Michelle J. Tuft  
Superintendent of Parks Corrie Guynn  
Office Manager Park Services Dima Kirland  
Matt Brandmeyer, Village of Skokie

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Aberman called the public hearing of the Board of Park Commissioners for the Seneca Park Land Swap with Lubavitch Chabad to order at 6:00 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

President Aberman introduced herself, Vice President Mike Reid, Commissioner Mary Oshana, Executive Director Michelle Tuft, and Superintendent of Parks Corrie Guynn.

**SENECA PARK LAND SWAP WITH LUBAVITCH CHABAD**

Mr. Guynn went through a PowerPoint Presentation for the proposed changes. The changes include:

- Swapping land between Lubavitch Chabad and the Park District to build an approximately 23-spot parking lot for the synagogue.
- The parking lot will be available to the public as well as the synagogue.
- The basketball court would be relocated further east, towards the middle of the park.
- The project will have no cost to the Park District, Lubavitch Chabad will incur all costs with the project.
- The Village of Skokie has agreed to relocate the alley.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Residents voiced their concerns about several issues. These residents live across the street or down the street from the park. The concerns that were discussed are:

- Neighbors will be looking at a parking lot instead of the park.

- Home values will decrease.
- Flooding is now prevalent in the area; this change will make it worse.
- Visually not attractive.
- Possible crime in the parking lot and residents do not trust that police will be there when a crime occurs.
- Too much or not enough lighting.
- Barriers around the parking lot.
- The parking lot would add heat to the environment.
- Lack of communication from Lubavitch Chabad to the residents during large events.

Mr. Brandmeyer from the Village said the construction of the new parking lot would be an improvement to water run-off; there would not be a negative impact but instead an improvement to the area. Mr. Brandmeyer assured the residents that it would be done the right way.

Residents suggested constructing diagonal parking near the alley that would create 9-12 spaces.

Superintendent Guynn said that with the LED lighting, it is much easier to control where the lights will shine/focus. Too much or too little lighting is easy to address with LED lighting.

Residents suggested putting a gate to close the parking lot when it is not used.

Lubavitch Chabad Rabbi Yochanan Posner thanked all the residents for attending the meeting and voicing their concerns. Rabbi Posner affirmed that Lubavitch Chabad wants to be good neighbors. Creating the 23-space parking lot would reduce synagogue parking on the streets adjacent to Seneca Park. The congregation’s intention is to do the right thing by their neighbors, to be helpful, responsible, and kind. Rabbi Posner said the congregation is orthodox, and the people walk to the synagogue and do not drive to weekly services. It is only during special events that the congregation drives.

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

President Aberman thanked the residents for their questions and comments. She further stated that communication would be important moving forward between the Rabbi and the residents and suggested exchanging emails. Residents agreed to that.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Aberman thanked everyone for attending and providing input, and adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

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Susan Aberman  
President

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Michelle Tuft  
Secretary

<p><b>Vision Statement</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Mission Statement</b> The Skokie Park District will realize its vision through teamwork, community partnerships, sound fiscal management, and creativity in every area of its operation.</p> <p><b>Core Values</b> The Skokie Park District will fulfill its mission through:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Commitment• Integrity• Innovation• Service •Openness •Environmental Stewardship •Inclusiveness</li> </ul> </p>
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