

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 16, 2021  
7:00 P.M.**

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**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present:

President Michael Reid  
Vice President Khemarey Khoeun  
Commissioner Michael W. Alter  
Commissioner Susan Aberman  
Commissioner Minal Desai

Others Present:

Executive Director/Secretary Michelle J. Tuft  
Superintendent of Business Services William G. Schmidt  
Superintendent of Facilities Jon Marquardt  
Superintendent of Parks Corrie Guynn  
Superintendent of Recreation Breanne Labus  
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez  
Marketing and Communications Manager Jim Bottorff  
Park Services Office Mgr./IT System Support Dima Kirland  
Director of Information Technology David Hunt  
Landscaping Supervisor, Stephen Ames  
Park Specialist II, Genevieve Nano  
Skokie Resident, Louis Mercer  
Skokie Resident, Julianna Oh  
Skokie Resident, Mary Oshana  
Skokie Resident, Janice Dobshuetz

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Reid called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to remote attendance, President Reid confirmed that each board member could see and hear the board meeting.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Alter moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 19, 2021, bills payable for the month of January/February 2021, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**FISCAL YEAR ENDED 04/30/2020 COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (CAFR), MANAGEMENT LETTER AND CONTROL DEFICIENCY**

Treasurer Schmidt introduced Mr. John Epperson of Miller Cooper & Co. Ltd. to present the audit. The Board previously received the draft audit, to review prior to the board meeting. Mr. Epperson summarized the audit report, management letter, and control deficiency letter and

asked for questions. Mr. Epperson said the District will receive an unmodified opinion which is the highest level of assurance. There were two minor internal control deficiencies. One issue was requiring a second signature for payroll processing and the other was regarding the timeliness of bank reconciliations. The audit was done almost 100% virtually and worked out well. He said that Mr. Schmidt does an excellent job preparing the CAFR and the District will receive the Certificate of Achievement in Excellence of Financial Reporting again this year. Mr. Epperson advised staff to be aware of phishing schemes and other data technology breaches, so they do not have any financial or data loss. President Reid thanked Mr. Epperson for the presentation.

Vice President Khoeun moved to approve the fiscal year end 04/30/2020 CARF, management letter and control deficiency letter. Commissioner Alter seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

### **SKATIUM FUNDING UPDATE**

Superintendent Marquardt reminded the Board that the Skatium project was to begin in April 2021. The start date was dependent on the notification of PARC grant recipients, preparing bids, and Board approval. PARC grants have not been awarded and there is no timeline on when announcements will occur. Staff reviewed the previous timeline and decided to postpone the project. A new timeline was created with a deadline to start the project of July 19, 2021.

Mr. Marquardt discussed the two compressors at the Skatium. Currently compressor #1 is running fine. Compressor #2 is not good. The plan is to rebuild compressor #1 to make sure it will alleviate any issue if compressor #2 fails. If compressor #2 fails it can be rebuilt through our maintenance agreement at no cost. If compressor #2 fails completely a new compressor may need to be purchased for an estimated cost of \$75,000. Staff is optimistic that the equipment will make it through next year.

President Reid asked where the funding will come from if compressor #2 does need to be replaced. Ms. Tuft said it would be funded out of the capital improvement fund. President Reid said he was on a call with the IAPD and no one knows the status of the PARC grants at this time.

Vice President Khoeun asked if compressor #2 was replaced, would it be used after the renovation. Ms. Tuft responded no. Commissioner Desai asked if it could be sold and Ms. Tuft said the equipment is so old that it could possibly be used for parts at another agency. There would not be any financial gain.

Skatium Manager Kurt VonHelms affirmed that he thinks we can continue as we are now with the rebuilding of compressor #1. Mr. VonHelms said if compressor #2 fails over the summer we would not be able to make it through on one compressor. Ms. Tuft said if the compressor failed, a worst-case scenario, the project could begin earlier.

No motion needed, for informational purposes only.

### **AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE REPLACEMENT VEHICLE**

Superintendent Guynn informed the Board that at the March 17, 2020 board meeting the Board authorized the purchase of 2020 Ford 150 Regular Cab 4x4 truck through the Illinois State Joint Purchase Program. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the purchase was delayed. The original approved price was \$27,720 but the price has increased for the newer 2021 model.

The truck will replace a 2009 Ford 150 with 21,600 miles and will be used by the Landscape Supervisor. The truck being replaced will remain in the fleet and be used for trash removal. The current vehicle used for trash removal has 92,610 miles and will be sold through an online auction.

Commissioner Desai moved to authorize staff to purchase a 2021 Ford 150 Regular Cab 4x4 Pickup from Morrow Brothers Ford of Greenfield, IL \$29,700.00. Vice President Khoeun seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF F550 SUPER CAB 4X4 DUMP TRUCK BID**

Superintendent Guynn said this vehicle was approved for purchase at the March 2020 board meeting, but due to Covid-19 the purchase was delayed. On January 29, 2021 bids were received for a F550 Super Cab 4x4 Dump Truck. Three bids were received, and the low bid was \$52,172. A plow will be purchased through a separate provider and will cost \$5,800 bringing the total purchase to \$58,000 placing the vehicle under the budgeted amount of \$61,000.

Vice President Khoeun moved to approve the bid of Bob Ridings, Inc. located in Taylorville, IL to provide a F550 Extended Cab 4x4 Dump Truck for \$52,172. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

#### **GENEVIEVE NANO MIDWEST INSTITUTE OF PARKS EXECUTIVES AWARD**

Superintendent Guynn said we have an excellent staff at Park Services and Genevieve is at the top. She primarily wrote the grant for the native pollinators at Skokie Sports Park and Hamlin Park, and is well deserving of this award.

Landscaping Supervisor Stephen Ames said Genevieve was nominated for the Employee of the Year Award through the Midwest Institute of Park Executives. Genevieve was one of three Employee of the Award winners. Of the three award winners one is selected as the winner of the Ralph Voris award and Genevieve was selected. She will receive a \$525 monetary certificate to be used for training or continued education. Genevieve received the award because of her ability with grant writing, her dedication, and her creation of a volunteer program. The volunteers meet once a week working on native areas. Mr. Ames said she is well deserving of this award. The Board congratulated Genevieve. She thanked Mr. Ames for the nomination and said she really enjoys working for the District.

No motion needed, for informational purposes only.

#### **SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT IPRA/IAPD CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE AWARD**

Superintendent Marquardt said he received an IPRA/IAPD email about the annual awards and this year a new award was added: The Champions of Change Award. Mr. Marquardt read the details for the award and thought it was exactly what the District has been doing for equity and diversity, so he spoke with Marketing and Communications Manager Jim Bottorff and they submitted a nomination in October. In mid-December Mr. Marquardt was notified that the District won the award. The winner was announced at the IPRA/IAPD conference. Mr. Marquardt shared a video with the Board of the award announcement and Mr. Marquardt showed the Board the award.

Ms. Tuft said the staff are all very proud of the award and thanked Mr. Marquardt for taking the lead on this, as he does with the district's diversity projects and programs. She also thanked Mr. Bottorff for assisting with the nomination and for submitting pictures.

Commissioner Aberman suggested posting the award information on the lighted signs and to ask the Village of Skokie include in their Village newsletter. Commissioner Aberman said the Village should see that we received this award and be proud of it. Ms. Tuft said they were good suggestions. The video is posted on Facebook and the website. President Reid said we received great reviews. Vice President Khouen said it was very nice to get the acknowledgement.

No motion needed, for informational purposes only.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Aberman asked how she could receive the SPD e-newsletters from Fitness First and the Skatium. Ms. Tuft suggested going to the website and requesting the newsletters online. Ms. Tuft can assist if needed.

President Reid is very happy with the LED lighting savings. It is a tremendous amount of savings.

President Reid asked if the Exploritorium will be re-opening soon. Ms. Tuft said staff is working with the Village of Skokie Health Department. The Exploritorium is an indoor playground and the Illinois Department of Public Health does not allow indoor playgrounds to open. Commissioner Aberman said she attended an indoor rental at another organization with limited capacity and it worked out very well and would like the District to be able to do the same. Superintendent Labus has submitted a proposal for private rentals and reservations for the Exploritorium to the Village of Skokie Health Department. If permission is granted, we will open in a limited capacity.

President Reid asked about the date of Spring Greening is this year. The date for Spring Greening is April 18.

President Reid said there are two Little Free Libraries available, one at Mulford Park and one at Pohatan Park. President Reid said this would be a good group project for the Commissioners. Mr. Guynn suggested Mulford Park and said the Skokie Public Library is stocking the books for the libraries. Commissioners are responsible for cleaning and making sure the library is maintained.

Commissioner Desai asked about neighborhood ice rinks. Mr. Guynn said staff has had discussions. We have two very beautiful indoor rinks that can be used for skating. His concern is the cost, especially for staff labor. It is very labor intensive with only 10-15 skateable days. Ms. Tuft said staff is considering a pop-up skating event at Emily Oaks Nature Center this year if possible.

### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Ms. Tuft asked the Board to select a date for the Finance Committee Meeting for the budget presentation. Every year staff presents a specific area in detail. This year Ms. Tuft suggested looking at each area and how it has been affected by Covid-19. The Board agreed. The date of March 9 at 6:00 p.m. was selected for the meeting.

Ms. Tuft received an email today, along with the Board, from Mr. Louis Mercer regarding changing the name of the Skokie Indians. Ms. Tuft replied to Mr. Mercer explaining that the Skokie Indians is an affiliate and a separate entity from the Park District and that he would have to reach out to the president of the Skokie Indians directly. Mr. Marquardt reached out to the Skokie Indians and was told they do not have any plans to change their name. Ms. Tuft and Mr. Marquardt are going to try to persuade them to reconsider changing their name. There is precedent in doing this. Also, because the District won the Champions of Change Award it is appropriate that we try to help facilitate the change. Vice President Khoeun asked to keep the Board posted.

Mr. Louis Mercer said it was amazing that the same day he sent his email, the Board is talking about the issue. He previously reached out to the leadership of the Skokie Indians. The name is offensive to Native Americans. Mr. Mercer offered his support to the District. He asked in what ways the District could use their leverage. Ms. Tuft said she would first reach out to the Skokie Indians to try to convince them to make the change. Staff will also review the affiliate agreement with them and can discuss this issue with the District's attorney. She will approach this issue in a friendly manner. Ms. Tuft said if we need some assistance, we may reach out to Mr. Mercer.

Vice President Khoeun asked Mr. Mercer about any conversations that residents had with the Skokie Indians. Mr. Mercer said he had reached out and got silence. The league references that the Village of Skokie uses Native American iconography as a cover for them using it. They are not motivated to make the change and say they are honoring Native Americans and are not being offensive towards them. Mr. Reid thanked Mr. Mercer for his comments.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Aberman moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Alter seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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Mike Reid  
President

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Michelle J. Tuft  
Secretary