

# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District Approves New Strategic Plan**

**Waukegan, IL (March 13, 2015)** – The Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners approved the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan at a recent meeting. Barbara Heller, of Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc, returned to assist with the new strategic plan which built upon the strategies and outcomes of the previous 2010 plan. The plan reflects significant public input from a variety of sources including a public meeting with more than 80 community members in attendance.

The District reaffirmed the mission statement: The Waukegan Park district is committed to providing parks, facilities and leisure opportunities to our culturally diverse population through leadership with community involvement, dedicated staff and sound management. The vision statement remained the same; however, the values statement was updated to describe the current organization. The Sustainability Value now reads, “The Board and staff will use a collaborative and cooperative team based approach that results in the best possible decisions for the long term greater good of the entire community.

The plan is organized by strategic themes, goals and initiatives spanning the next three fiscal years. The following is a summary:

- The new plan focuses on community connections and engagement, enhancing the image of Waukegan, and increasing customer satisfaction.

- Initiatives are to be aligned with community needs such as expanded youth and family programming, enriched health and wellness opportunities, outreach into neighborhoods and meeting needs of the underserved with low-cost/affordable programs.
- The District will use best practices to invest in and develop infrastructure. Optimizing the use of external funding such as Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) and Park and Recreation Facilities Construction (PARC) grants will support the renovation of existing parks and development of new ones.
- The District will be more financially transparent providing community access to financial information.
- Qualified, trained staff and sustainable business practices are the heart of any high performing team and the District will continue its accreditations from its professional organizations: the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Illinois Association of Park Districts and Illinois Park and Recreation Association Distinguished Agency and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA).

Terry Duffy, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners summed up the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan this way. “This plan is a bold roadmap for the next three years. We will be celebrating the District’s Centennial midway through the plan, and I can assure you the plan sets the stage as we enter our next 100 years of service and excellence.” The complete 2015-2017 Waukegan Park District Strategic Plan is available on the District’s website: [www.waukeganparks.org](http://www.waukeganparks.org)

#### **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 48 sites and more than 735 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, an outdoor swimming pool, disc golf course, dog exercise area, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including

basketball and tennis. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, the Bowen Park Theatre Company, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 59 full-time and over 250 part-time, year round, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), the Illinois Association of Park District (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and sustains a Level A Loss Control Program. The district was a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012 and 2013, and awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013.

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