

Waukegan Park District  
Jack Benny Center for the Arts  
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 4, 2014  
12:00 pm meeting  
Lilac Cottage  
1911 N. Sheridan Road-Waukegan, IL 60087

I. Call to Order  
Superintendent Claudia Freeman called the meeting to order at 12:03pm.

II. Roll Call  
In attendance were Claudia Freeman, Ty Rohrer, Debra Carl, Teddy Anderson, David Johnson, David Motley, Harry Came, Jane Waller, Roxanne Swanson, and Carlos Valentin.  
12:04pm MaryFran Troha and Jo Dooley arrived  
12:06pm Jaime O'Meara and Nina Geater arrived  
12:07pm Jason Clark arrived  
12:11pm Pat Foley arrived

Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Introduction of Advisory Members

Pat Foley, Board of Commissioners – Waukegan Park District; Theodora Anderson, Waukegan Park District- Manager of Community Relations; Roxanne Swanson, Waukegan Symphony Orchestra member and Violin/Piano teacher at Jack Benny Center; Debra Carl, Cultural Arts Specialist; Dave Johnson, Member of the Waukegan Band Foundation; Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Jason Clark, Artistic Director of the Bowen Park Theatre Company; Jo Dooley, local business person; David Motley; Representative for the City of Waukegan; Harry Came, President of Waukegan Historical Society; Jane Waller, Chair of the Waukegan Arts Council; Carlos Valentin, Waukegan Park District employee; MaryFran Troha, Supporter and parent of a former student; Jamie O'Meara, President of Waukegan Main Street, Nina Geater, Poet; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor

B. Proposed Changes for 2015 Summer Programming

a. Park and Play

Little Lake County did a tour of Lake County playgrounds with Bowen Park as their first destination. This was very successful. The district liked the idea. Different entities within the WPD are coordinating to create a new program titled Parks and Play. This will be set-up like a special event and it will help let people know of all of the various things that the WPD has to offer. Cultural

Arts Division will incorporate Summer H\*E\*A\*T\* into Parks and Play as its numbers have declined.

b. Strike Calendar

Freeman announced that schools will be in session until at least June 17<sup>th</sup> due to the teacher strike. WPD spring and summer programming will be changed due to this new calendar from the schools.

c. Washington Park

CAD is going to start using the Washington Park band shell for string quartets, brass groups, and poetry. Poetry in the past years was not getting many poets or audience, it will be rolled into this program with poets being welcome and encouraged to share poetry before the music starts and during intermission. We are trying to enhance our Summer in the Arts programming.

Movies in the Park will be moved to be three Fridays in a row, the last Friday of the month in July and first two in August. This change is because sunset is earlier then and the movie can start before 9pm.

Commissioner Foley said that she really liked the idea of using Washington Park and that she could see it turning into the downtown park.

Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival drew 2000-2500 people this year. This was the best number that we have had since the day the festival coincided with the opening of the Bowen playground. CAD partnered with the Puerto Rican Society to host the event, Christmas in July. The future of this event will depend on available grants. Tanabata and our other special events were also a great success this year.

CAD received the Helen Doria Award for Arts in the Parks.

CAD served over 10,000 patrons with free programs.

Jackie Rijos arrived at 12:25pm

C. Community Engagement and Waukegan Parks Foundation Update

Theodora Anderson reported that Christine Benitez, Director at DePaul University, assisted with the community engagement focus groups and meetings. Anderson introduced the *Latinization* books for reference. Discussion was of the focus groups and what was learned from them. 3 things were identified: people expect WPD to provide safe places for people, the community expects the WPD to support and supervise children in non-school time, and also the WPD is expected to promote nature. The average age of the community is under 30 years. We (WPD) know we have to communicate differently. WPD also looking on improving collaboration with other entities. Examples of collaboration include new trails and lakefront development. The Park District is valued and associated with positive memories. Collaborating with business leaders to change perception

and keep parks safe. The Waukegan Band Foundation and Arts Park is a great example. School District will print and distribute fliers to all K-8 grade students at cost if they are provided in English and Spanish. A resource book was developed to help staff and the board. Commissioner Foley wants to see the resource notebook published. David Johnson said this research validates and ties all the information together and provides information on where to go next. There will be more weekend and evening programs.

The board of the Foundation has met. The directors are a diverse group with the consistent quality that they are all friends of the WPD and have shown a commitment to Waukegan. The directors will put a plan together for how the Foundation will move forward. Wayne Motley, President of the Board, Charlotte Callahan is Vice President, Harry Came Treasurer, and Ennedy Rivera as Secretary.

12:44pm Anderson left the meeting

D. Upcoming Strategic Plan – Forward Thinking:

A new Strategic plan is underway that is forward thinking and moving to the future. New strategic plan software is in use. New registration software goes live in the Fall. WPD is leaving AEK and going to RecTrac.

E. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Most celebrations are still in the works but some are planned most of them will be in 2017 which is the 100<sup>th</sup> year. December 26, 2016, WPD will host a fireworks display. August 12, 2017 will be a 100 year celebration event. The hope is that this will be a once in a lifetime experience in Bowen Park. Most events and programs will incorporate the 100 year theme. Freeman said that Cultural Arts will do a children's art competition – not just visual art but writing and music too. A few items will appear in the very near future including a "Story Corps" type booth where participants will be able to record some of their fondest memories of the Waukegan Park District. Johnson mentioned that the Waukegan Band Foundation is looking for a new director band is typically 45-60 people. 2015 will be the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the band.

F. Proposed Museum Addition

Rohrer introduced the Waukegan History Museum addition. He explained the conceptual design that was created by Partners in Design. Announced that the Waukegan Historical Society is currently planning fundraising for the addition and this information will be sent out by the end of the year.

G. Advisory Comments

MaryFran Troha commended Rohrer for participating in the Episcopal church 125 year celebration as Rev Dean Ganster.

Commissioner Foley asked if there was any value in adding/including other groups in Waukegan that were around 100 years old in participating in the Park Districts celebrations.

Jane Waller expressed the gratitude from Waukegan Arts Council for all the Park District has provided. They have done some surveys and research and have found that there is renewed excitement for the Arts in Waukegan but the arts are fragmented and underfunded.

Freeman announced that the district has new software called On-Strategy to help execute new goals. Coming this fall will also be new registration software. This will greatly improve our capabilities for online sales of tickets.

H. Showing of the Gold Medal Video

I. Future Advisory meetings:

- a. Spring: April 30, 2015
- b. Fall: October 29, 2015

IV. No closed session

V. Meeting adjourned by Commissioner Foley at 1:14pm.

Waukegan Park District  
Jack Benny Center for the Arts  
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 4, 2014  
6:00 pm meeting  
Lilac Cottage  
1911 N. Sheridan Road-Waukegan, IL 60087

- I. Call to Order  
Commissioner Pat Foley called the meeting to order at 6:06pm
  
- II. Roll Call  
In attendance were Pat Foley, Claudia Freeman, Jackie Rijos, Ty Rohrer, Debra Carl, Theodora Anderson, Lisa May, and Jason Clark  
Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.  
Martha Padilla-Ramos arrived at 6:08pm
  
- III. Review, Discuss, Decide
  - A. Introduction of Advisory Members  
Pat Foley, Waukegan Park District Commissioner, Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Jackie Rijos, Cultural Arts Secretary; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor; Debra Carl, Cultural Arts Specialist; Theodora Anderson, Waukegan Park District- Manager/Community Relations; Lisa May, 7<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman; Jason Clark, Artistic Director – Bowen Park Theatre; Martha Padilla Ramos, Teacher at McCall school/Arts Supporter
  
  - B. Proposed Changes for 2015 Summer Programming
    - a. Park and Play  
Claudia Freeman discussed proposed changes for the Cultural Arts Division summer programming. Little Lake County did a tour of Lake County playgrounds with Bowen Park as their first destination. Waukegan Park District provided Arts Park and a nature program for this event. Teddy Anderson and Freeman discussed bringing this concept to WPD. Different entities within the WPD are coordinating to create a new program titled Parks and Play. CAD will move Summer H\*E\*A\*T\* program into this. Intent is to promote Recreation and Cultural Arts programs. Park and Play will be held during the Fridays in June at Bowen, Bevier, and Belvidere Parks.  
  
Jason Clark discussed the Swim Smart program. He asked if there is a final swim class that takes students to the beach to learn how to swim in Lake Michigan. Martha Padilla-Ramos stated it is a good idea to take parents with to the Lake. It is difficult being in the lake and getting too far out and having a hard time trying to get back in. Pat Foley responded that we do have a swim program but raising the issue of learning to swim in Lake Michigan is a good suggestion. Lisa May also pointed out that last summer the City of Waukegan and Sam Stevens from WPD

coordinated a half day swim class at the lake for safety and saving maneuvers. A schoolteacher with Padilla-Ramos works a local Learn to Sail program. Padilla-Ramos thought this would be a good idea for a partnership. Anderson also discussed the Park Grant for the new pool at the Field House. Commissioner Foley commented that the Park District Commissioners are committed to teaching all Waukegan children how to swim. Tennis and Disc Golf are also lifetime sports.

b. Strike Calendar

Padilla-Ramos let everyone know that there is a possibility that the school district may be going to a 4-day workweek in the summer. Freeman noted that other programming will change due to new school calendar.

c. Washington Park

Padilla-Ramos brought up concerns about perception of Washington Park as a gang hangout. Anderson responded that there is a strategy that other communities have used to help change the perception of unsafe parks. Padilla-Ramos suggested that Lilac Ledge could shuttle their residents over to the park for the programs. Commissioner Foley suggested a guitar trio or mariachi band she said that she really liked the idea of using Washington Park and that she could see it turning into the downtown park.

In July, programming there will be new programming at Washington Park Gazebo/Band Shell. Plans are to have music groups at the band shell that would include strings, winds and brass. With Poetry in the past years not getting many poets or audience, it will be rolled into this program with poets being welcome and encouraged to share poetry before the music starts and during intermission.

Movies in the Park will be moved to be three Fridays in a row, the last Friday of the month in July and first two in August. This change is because sunset is earlier then and the movie can start before 9pm.

Freeman advised the group that the Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival had 2,000 to 2,500 participants this past summer. Continued Tanabata and coordinated a new event, Christmas in July, with the Puerto Rican Arts Alliance. A grant was received for this event and unfortunately the possibility of another grant for the future does not seem like a possibility.

Cultural Arts Division won the Helen Doria Arts in the Parks Award.

Staff did an amazing job with our outreach programs and we were able to serve over 10,000 children and adults with our free programs.

C. Community Engagement and Waukegan Parks Foundation Update

Anderson stated that it started as a branding project for the WPD but it was found that consultants had not worked with Latino communities. We needed to talk to the community. Five focus groups were created based on diversity. The five

groups: faith, government and institutions, businesses, media, and not for profits. The purpose was to better define communications and to find partnerships that the WPD could explore. Found that the public sees three common needs of the WPD-1. provide safe parks, 2. supervise children, 3. provide access to nature. The WPD is also perceived as contributing greatly to the city and the public is looking at the WPD to be a leader to change the image of Waukegan. WPD is working with other entities to connect trails and also to help develop the lakefront.

First Waukegan Park District Foundation meeting took place. Wayne Motley volunteered to be president. Char Callahan is the Vice President, Harry Came is Treasurer and Ennedy Rivera is the Secretary. Tried to develop a diverse group that is loyal to the park district and the city. Board members were selected from across the demographics with the consistent quality being that they were friends of the Park District.

D. Upcoming Strategic Plan-Forward Thinking

WPD has new software called On-Strategy to help execute new goals. Coming this fall will also be new registration software. This will greatly improve our capabilities for online sales of tickets.

E. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Rohrer updated the group on the plans for the WPD 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Announced a fireworks display will kick off the festivities on December 26, 2016. The big centennial festival will take place at Bowen Park on August 12, 2017. All WPD events and programs will have a centennial theme throughout 2017. A few items will appear in the very near future including a “Story Corps” type booth where participants will be able to record some of their fondest memories of the Waukegan Park District.

F. Proposed Museum Addition

Rohrer introduced the Waukegan History Museum addition. When asked he explained the conceptual design was created by Partners in Design. Announced that the Waukegan Historical Society is currently planning fundraising for the addition and this information will be sent out by the end of the year.

G. Advisory Comments

Padilla-Ramos asked about doing Yoga in Lilac Cottage. Freeman informed Padilla-Ramos of the programs that the CAD already has and that are available in the dance studio.

Padilla-Ramos brought up concerns about flyers that are not distributed once they are sent to the schools. She recommended trying to get information into the Superintendent (Dr. Donald Batiste) bulletin.

Padilla-Ramos suggested getting involved with the Lake County Forest Preserve’s Gateway to Nature Programs. Freeman and Anderson informed her that CAD

works with Susie Schreiber from the Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group and they assist in providing the For Earths Sake programming. (Frog study/Owls/Bats/etc.) Debra Carl informed the group of programming going on in January and February 2015.

H. Showing of the Gold Medal Video

Freeman went over the 2014-2015 season.

I. Future Advisie meetings

- a. Spring: April 30, 2015
- b. Fall: October 29, 2015

IV. No closed session

V. Adjournment:

Commissioner Foley adjourned the meeting at 7:37pm.