

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Committee of the Whole
October 23, 2012**

The Committee of the Whole of the Waukegan Park District met in a regular meeting on October 23, 2012 at the Rose Administrative Center, 2000 Belvidere, Waukegan IL.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Sarocka at 4:00 p.m. who directed a call of the roll.

II. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Duffy, Motley, Foley, and President Sarocka. Absent: Commissioner Kilkelly. Also present was Executive Director Greg Petry and Board Attorney Charles Smith.

III. Topics

A. Discussion on reaching out to and engaging the community to participate in programs and services. Mr. Petry stated that each department will be providing an explanation as to their efforts to accomplish the Board's goal of providing better communication to the community regarding the services and programs available through the Park District.

At 4:05 p.m., Commissioner Kilkelly entered the meeting. **Motion by Commissioner Duffy, seconded by Commissioner Motley, to seat Commissioner Kilkelly. Motion carried unanimously.**

Claudia Freeman reviewed the past and current efforts of the Cultural Arts Department to reach out to the minority communities to involve them in the Cultural Arts programs. Ms. Freeman related that when she started in October 1999 the first Latino focus group was organized. Since that time there have been continuing efforts to involve the Hispanic community. She also emphasized the work she is doing with the North Chicago Center for the Arts to provide programming of interest to the African-American community. The Cultural Arts department is also concentrating its efforts through the Waukegan School District to make the school-aged children aware of the Cultural Arts programs and to have them service the needs of the minority communities.

Michael Trigg reviewed the efforts of the Parks Department to involve various segments of the community. His department is emphasizing intergovernmental cooperation in order to achieve this goal. Mr. Trigg reflected on the work that the Parks Department has done with the City of Waukegan, the Waukegan School District, Stormwater Management, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, and the Port Authority to ensure that the Parks Department is answering the needs of the minority communities. Mr. Trigg also stated that he has personally worked with the Boy Scouts, specifically Eagle projects, to involve the boys in environmental issues. He has also

organized volunteer clean-up projects involving all members of the community, particularly for Earth Day and Arbor Day tree planting activities. These efforts have been primarily through the schools. Additionally, the Parks Department has worked with the BMX Club and Mr. Trigg spearheads the Waukegan Park District Green Team effort. Mr. Trigg explained the Park District's work with SWALCO and highlighted the upcoming environmental electronics recycling effort on November 17, 2012 at the Belvidere Recreation Center.

Jim Glogovsky pointed out that there are not as many opportunities for the Finance Department to be involved in outreach minority communities, but did highlight the work of Tanya Brady. He further stated that the Finance Department, which is responsible for the golf banquet operations, has made an effort to expand the menu to include food that would be traditional in the Hispanic community. This is consistent with the marketing efforts to attract more ethnic festivals and parties at the Bonnie Brook Club House.

Teddy Anderson advised of her efforts in promoting Park District programs through Hispanic publications, the People's Voice newspaper, and local radio. There is a significant amount of bilingual advertising done in an effort to reach the Hispanic community. Further, she has had the Park District involved in all neighborhood school festivals and has also helped to sponsor a job fair.

Alicia Mentell reviewed the efforts to involve all young people in the recreational activities, starting with T-Ball for kids starting at age 6. Ms. Mentell also noted the Park District's participation in the No Child Left Inside initiative that went on this past year. She explained that many members of the Latino community are reluctant to allow their children to participate in activities without parental supervision. She noted that many Latino families feel that family cook-outs in the parks are important. Of greatest importance to the Latino community seems to be trusting the source and she has seen increased participation, particularly in family events, as opposed to activities where the parents would drop off their children at the parks.

Ms. Mentell also emphasized that Special Recreation received a grant to try and involve more Hispanic families and that she noted a dramatic increase of minority representation under the programs initiated by this grant. She has further done an assessment of the under-served population within the District. This has been done in part through the Community Education for Leisure and looking at the information gathered by the No Child Left Inside results.

Mr. Petry suggested that some of these agencies that have partnered with the Park District might be willing to come and address the Board at either a Board meeting or a future Committee of the Whole meeting. He further suggested that it would be good to start with the No Child Left Inside group.

Ms. Mentell stated that to the extent that her department can, they will track the ethnic background of program participants. She did note a large increase in minority participation in the Swim Safe program this past year.

Mr. Petry summarized the work of the Park District and emphasized his collaboration with other groups to reach families and make them aware of Park District programs and events. He noted that there is a reluctance among people who may be in the country illegally to sign up and register for events and again suggested the No Child Left Inside group be invited to address the Board.

B. Other Business. Mr. Petry reported on his discussions with Hal Katz concerning the YMCA in Vernon Hills and Waukegan.

Commissioner Duffy stated that he wanted to see follow up on the out-reach initiative.

Commissioner Foley asked if the Chicago Wilderness Committee could be another outreach group that would come and talk to the Board.

Commissioner Motley had no additional comments.

Commissioner Kilkelly stated that while she was disappointed that the Park District did not win the gold medal at the national Park & Recreation conference, she wanted to congratulate all the members of the staff who helped Waukegan be one of the four finalists from across the nation for this prestigious award. She also congratulated Claudia Freeman for the recognition she received at the national conference.

President Sarocka also noted staff's preparation of material for the Gold Medal presentation and stated that it was outstanding. He further stated that the plaques designating the Waukegan Park District as a finalist should be prominently displayed at Park District facilities.

Motion by Commissioner Duffy, seconded by Commissioner Foley, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles W. Smith
Board Attorney/Secretary