

# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District's King Park Redevelopment Receives \$400,000 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant from the State of Illinois**

**Waukegan, IL (February 8, 2019)** – The Waukegan Park District has been awarded a \$400,000 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to assist in the renovation of Eugene P. King Park, located at 301 South Avenue in Waukegan. OSLAD grants are awarded to local governments to develop land for public outdoor recreation.

Planned improvements to King Park include installation of additional play equipment, a large new picnic shelter and renovation of the existing picnic shelter, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant restrooms, a walking trail, a challenge course, signage, lighting, renovation of the existing baseball field, a new half-court basketball court, and new half-size soccer field. A large open field will remain for recreational use and family gatherings.

The Waukegan Park District's project is one of 89 projects funded by the OSLAD grant program this year. The program is funded through the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax.

In a press release issued by IDNR, Governor J.B. Pritzker said, "Investments in Illinois' local parks makes it easier for families and recreation enthusiasts to enjoy our state's beauty and help their communities thrive. Parks projects will also create jobs, providing a boost to local

economic development efforts in dozens of communities and spurring additional investment throughout the state.”

Waukegan Park District President Marc Jones stated, “King Park is a living tribute to its namesake, Dr. Eugene King, one of Waukegan’s African American heroes. It is gratifying to work with neighborhood groups to make this project a reality and support the children and families in the community, much like Dr. King did during his lifetime.”

“Improving King Park was one of my top priorities. Thanks to the OSLAD grant, we will be able to renovate one of our neighborhood parks on the south side of Waukegan in the upcoming year,” said Waukegan Park District Executive Director Jay Lerner.

The community will be invited to celebrate the project’s groundbreaking later this year. More information will be released soon.

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

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 50 properties and more than 737 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, Fitness and Aquatics Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan’s Greg Petry SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. 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, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 62 full-time and over 230 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), Illinois Association of Park Districts

(IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and maintains 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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