

**Parks, Open Space, and Facilities Master Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 11, 2021
10-11 am – Virtual Meeting**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Tim Girmscheid, Chair

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Nathan Hintz, President, Waukegan Parks Foundation

Marc Jones, Waukegan Township Supervisor

Noelle Kischer Lepper, City of Waukegan Director of Planning and Economic Development

Maggie Morales, Executive Director, Lake County Community Foundation

LeBaron Moten, Chief Operations Officer, Waukegan School District

Jesus Ruiz, Dean, Lakeshore Campus, College of Lake County

Randy Seebach, Director, Planning and Land Preservation, Lake County Forest Preserves

Anton Mathews, Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners Liaison

Jay Lerner, Executive Director, Waukegan Park District

Quincy Bejster, Superintendent of Parks, Waukegan Park District

Tim Girmscheid, Senior Park Planner, Waukegan Park District

Kristy De Boer, Park Planner, Waukegan Park District

Teddy Anderson, Superintendent of Community Relations, Waukegan Park District

Josue Pasillas, Communications Supervisor, Waukegan Park District

Kathy Colin, Intern, Community Relations, Waukegan Park District

III. Welcome - Executive Director Jay Lerner

Jay welcomed the committee members and discussed what the Master Plan is, the timeframe covered (2022-2027), and how important it is to Waukegan community that we work together as we plan for our shared future.

V. Description of the Purpose and Process for Creation of the 2022-27 Master Plan (T. Girmscheid)

Expectations are to complete the plan by year end.

Expected outcomes are that it will be approved by commissioners before January 2022 and cover five years, 2022-2027.

The Plan will provide guidance on parks, open space, and facilities and is meant to be high level and simple, different from previous plans in that it will not focus on service analysis; rather, this plan will focus on infrastructure, provide specific recommendations and a high level executive summary that can be reviewed and understood in 30 minutes.

The plan will be developed through conversations with individual influencers, a community input survey, and meetings with the Master Plan Committee and planning community representatives.

Planning staff will update GIS system and conduct research and benchmarking with other Gold Medal agencies.

- VI. **Review Main Elements of Partner Plans over the next 5 years-** updates, discussion of overlap, potential joint efforts, focus on open space, parks, facilities, community needs and gaps.

Waukegan School District #60- LeBaron Moten

The School District received a large federal infusion of capital funds, \$110 million over the next 10 years. \$10 million is dedicated to infrastructure such as roofing, paving, tuckpointing, mechanical, and playgrounds, focusing on K-5, 15 elementary schools, but not the early learning center. The plan is to consolidate work and update groups of schools. The School District and Park District have an intergovernmental partnership agreement for Before and After School Transportation and shared facilities use.

Lake County Forest Preserves—Randy Seebach

Two Lake County Forest Preserve properties, Waukegan Savanna, a sedge meadow, and Robert Lyons Woods, are in Waukegan. Connecting paths between Lyons Woods and the Des Plaines River Trail are underway. The first leg of the trail was installed in 2019 and included two WPD parks. The next leg will be a 2 mile stretch between Green Bay and Delany Roads, contingent on the Waukegan Airport Runway Expansion project. The trail with underpass for Yorkhouse is estimated to cost \$7.6 M (\$2.3 M is the Forest Preserves share) and the trail will go north to Wadsworth Road. Teddy asked if there was any discussion about a connecting trail to the Waukegan SportsPark. Randy said previously there had not been interest when proposed; Jay noted that there is interest now. Maggie Morales asked about safety at Lyons Woods. Ranger patrols and opening the area by clearing vegetation have been done to promote a safe environment.

Waukegan Parks Foundation-Nathan Hintz

Nathan discussed the Second Grade Swim Program that focuses on water safety for second graders in Waukegan Schools, about 3,200 students before COVID. The first capital project, the Percussion Playground, will open this summer at Rose Park. Scholarships to Waukegan Park District programs are supported by \$8,000 per year. Under consideration are projects related to pollinators, native plantings, food sustainability, a bandshell, and expansion of the swim program.

Lake County Community Foundation-Maggie Morales

The Lake County Community Foundation has been in existence for 14 years and Maggie has served as Executive Director for two years. The parent organization is the Chicago Community Trust, although they operate separately with their own boards and staff. The LCCF has \$19M in assets and covers all of Lake County; it recently moved its offices to University Center. The LCCF supports basic human needs, building leadership capacity, regional issues by funding local philanthropic and service organizations. It has brought people together to expand opportunities for capital investment from the philanthropic, business and government worlds.

College of Lake County-Lakeshore Campus- Jesus Ruiz

The College of Lake County is a transformational leader for the Waukegan Community. One particular interest is urban agricultural. What is being proposed is modeled after the Farm on Ogden, a multiuse facility located in Chicago's Lawndale neighborhood that supports and sustains a healthy urban community by bringing food, health, and jobs together in one location. Like the Farm on Ogden, the Botanic Garden is involved with this project which will occupy the new building under construction. The building, along with other plaza buildings, will house aquaponic agriculture, produce that can be sold or given away, culinary programs that train people to cook healthy, and a space for up to 300 people for meetings and banquets overlooking the lake. CLC is a patron of the arts and is exploring providing degrees/certificates in arts and communication, digital media and design and music recording. The Carnegie project provides a strategic opportunity for partnerships. The Central Plaza at the College will have green space that may be useful for Carnegie programming.

Waukegan Township-Marc Jones

The Waukegan Township is larger than the City of Waukegan also covering Park City, -, portions of Beach Park and up to 18th Street in North Chicago. The Township provides general Emergency Assistance to its residents. Its facilities include Park Place Senior Center, which shares a building with the Waukegan Park District, the Belvidere Recreation Center, Staben House which is re-opening after COVID for women and children, Eddie Washington Center, a residential community based program that uplifts and empowers men, mostly those who have experienced addiction, homelessness, and incarceration. The Township just received \$2 million in capital funds to improve these three facilities. There is an interest in working with the Lake County Health Department and the Field House to provide incentives for Staben House mothers and children to use the Field House. Senior services use Rose Park for picnics, the summer concert series, walking and exercise. Many seniors use free walking at the Field House. The Center is close to capacity with a line at the door upon opening. There is an existing intergovernmental agreement with the Park District in place, but opportunities exist to build upon the collaborative relationship.

City of Waukegan-Noelle Kischer Lepper

The City of Waukegan has a long history of collaboration with the Waukegan Park District and other organizations represented here. Special interests include the Waterfront Working Group, planting pollinator gardens, and transferring ownership of an inventory of properties to the Park District for future stewardship. (Jay will contact Noelle for details.)

The City recently completed a comprehensive plan. Themes included promoting events, beautification, lakefront activation, working with other institutions toward shared goals and increased civic pride, energizing youth, reviving neighborhoods, continued support of art, arts organizations, and art use in the community, development of city wide branding, increasing bike and trail network connectivity, linking parks and recreational use areas, resiliency of the environment, and conservation of natural areas.

- VII. Next Steps – next meeting date
A meeting date in August is planned. No date was set.

- VIII. Adjournment