

Lan-Oak Park District
Board Meeting
August 18, 2008

President Flanagin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Upon roll call the following were present were Commissioners Reynolds, Flanagin, Beymer and Leck. Staff present was Desjardins, Havran, Rushmeyer and Davenport. Also present was Primack, Kuniej, Wilson and Celmer. Absent: Commissioner Long

Motion made by Reynolds to accept the Consent Agenda which included Board meeting minutes of May 19 & July 21, 2008; May 19, 2008 Committee Meeting minutes; Executive Session meeting minutes of May 5, 19, and July 21, 2008; Refunds and Payroll Withholdings of July 24 & August 7, 2008; and AP Invoices of August 18, 2008. Second by Leck. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Reynolds, Beymer, Leck, Flanagin. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Reynolds began the meeting by asking Wilson if there would be consumption of alcohol at the Park Plaza dedication ceremony with Wilson replying that there would be no liquor sold or consumed on park property. He explained the reason for the letters in the packet.

Desjardins presented her report. Flanagin asked Desjardins if she could print up a report that would show the programs that the park district has offered over the past year and how many of those were successful and how many were not and the reasons as to why certain programs did not go. Wilson responded by saying that most programs are canceled due to low enrollment. He also explained that the staff will usually extend the registration deadlines, call patrons to remind them that a class they had been in prior would be starting up again, and also that staff will combine programs to increase enrollment to make the programs a go. Desjardins stated that she could give a report to the board regarding all programs offered but that it would not show why programs were not successful.

Desjardins asked the board to consider increasing the room rental fee for Room 104 due to the installation of the new kitchen amenities. This increase would be to cover the cost of the new amenities for the public use and any damages that may occur to the new appliances during a rental. She stated that she would like the rental fee increase to

take place starting September 1. Leck stated that the increase would be a good idea. Motion made by Reynolds to increase the room rental fee for room 104 from \$35/hr (residents) \$50/hr (non-residents) to \$50/hr (residents) to \$60/hr (non-residents). Second by Leck. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Reynolds, Beymer, Leck, Flanagin. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Desjardins stated that she had something to add to the Treasurer’s Report regarding the Operating Performance. Desjardins questioned the paragraph stating that the Community Center is operating at a loss. Desjardins explained that the park districts finances are seasonal and that there is a historic pattern of loss after the first quarter and that to say that loss in the first quarter is a predictor of the future is not true. Desjardins stated that summer is the slowest part of the season. Flanagin thanked Desjardins for explaining the deficit to the board.

Havran presented her report. Flanagin asked Havran to do a comparison of fees of other fitness centers in the surrounding areas. Flanagin asked if there would be a way to adjust the fitness center fees but still stay competitive. Wilson asked if the board was going to take the information that Havran would compile and actually use it. Flanagin stated that there was a statement made at the June board meeting that was in regards to fitness members wanting more services from the Fitness center. He said that if the fitness members want more services than they would have to pay more. Reynolds asked the board why they would make Havran do all of that work just because 1 fitness member complained about minimal staffing in the fitness center. Flanagin asked Havran to check and see if our fees are the lowest around with Wilson replying that our fees are in all likelihood the lowest next to Tinley Park. He also reminded the Board that the board has voted in the past to keep the fitness fees low so that Lansing residents could afford it.

Rushmeyer presented her report. Flanagin asked Rushmeyer how our preschool compared to other preschools in the area. Flanagin stated that he knew our preschool was pretty successful but how does it measure up to other preschools in the area. Wilson asked if he wanted comparisons to other preschools that were licensed or non-licensed. Beymer asked if the preschool was licensed with Desjardins responding no, the preschool is not licensed because government operated programs are exempt from needing to be licensed. She also stated that the preschool program follows the same guidelines that

licensed preschools follow. Desjardins asked what kind of comparison that the board would like to have and that the best comparison would be next to other licensed preschools.

Reynolds asked Rushmeyer if the co-ed softball program was running with Rushmeyer responding yes and that there were 6 teams and that the new volleyball season would be starting on November 6. Leck asked Rushmeyer if a person could register for volleyball without being on a team. Rushmeyer responded that you have to register with a team but that she would take down anyone's name that was interested in joining and try to find a team for them.

Davenport presented her report. She stated that the movie in the park program had a good turnout. Flanagan inquired about the community garage sale scheduled for August 23 and asked if moving the garage sale to the park plaza in the future would ever be an option. Davenport replied that due to the large number of spaces being sold that the park plaza might not be large enough. Leck asked about the price of the spaces with Davenport explaining that Lansing residents are charged \$5.00 and non-residents are charged \$10.00. Leck also asked about the program that was held at the Buford Walker Senior Home with Davenport replying that the seniors loved the program. Leck explained that she is a member of the Lansing Women's Business Association and that had done bingo at the senior home and that it was also a success and she wanted to know if the park district and the Women's Business Association could do a program at the senior home together. Davenport stated that she would look into that possibility.

Reynolds brought up to the board the matter regarding Fitness member Peter Julien. Reynolds passed out a report to the board regarding the complaints that were made by Mr. Julien. Reynolds also explained that she had watched the videotape regarding the incident that occurred between Mr. Julien and fitness attendant Mary Owens. Reynolds stated that Mr. Julien statements were untrue in that he never cleaned any machines after use, he never put any fitness equipment away that he had been using and his fitness bag was unattended for long periods of time and that he never went into his bag for any of the equipment that he said he needed for his workout. She also stated that the board needs to believe the staff when they the Board what is going on in the

fitness center. She further explained that the Board members needed to back up employees when it comes to issues like this.

Flanagin stated that Mr. Juliens suspension is upheld. Beymer stated that Julien had stated that he would not be coming back to the fitness center and that he would not be paying any more money. Desjardins also explained that the videotape shows him moving his gym bag after the facility attendant asked him to and that he then looks around and goes over and breaks the paper towel dispenser. Flanagin inquired about the cost of a new paper towel dispenser with Desjardins replying that the cost is around \$30.00. Flanagin stated that the cost of the new paper towel dispenser should be added to his bill that is in collections. Reynolds stated to Beymer and Commissioner Long should also watch the video with Beymer replying that he would be interested in seeing it. Primack said that it seemed like Mr. Julien was fighting to stay calm during the July board meeting with Flanagin agreeing with him. Desjardins explained that the fitness/aquatic supervisor couldn't witness everything that goes on in the fitness center and that she has to trust in the staff in situations like this one.

Desjardins reported that she has analyzed the visit logs from January 208 through the present that clearly prove that during the busiest times in the fitness center that there is a facility attendant on duty. Flanagin again stated that if fitness members want more personal attention then the Park District would have to hire more staff with that cost being passed on to the fitness members. Desjardins replied that the board and not fitness members have questioned staffing issues. Flanagin thanked both Reynolds and Desjardins on their hard work regarding the situation with Mr. Julien.

Havran brought up the fact that Julien said that she had only talked to him one time regarding his grunting while lifting weights in the fitness center. She stated that that was untrue; she also had to talk to him when he called one of the personal trainers a vulgar name. Desjardins explained to the board that she has a new security system in place that lets her monitor the Eisenhower center in different areas. She stated that the board members should not rush judgment on any situation until the videotape can be reviewed. She suggested that if a situation arises at a board meeting that the board members should just state that they would look into the matter and decide the course of action.

Desjardins, Rushmeyer, Havran and Davenport left the meeting at 7:48pm.

Wilson presented his report. Flanagin stated that the Finance and Personnel meeting to discuss the proposed Personnel Manual would be scheduled for some time after Labor Day. Leck stated that she would be on vacation September 6th thru the 13th. Wilson discussed the bike committee, which consists of Commissioners Flanagin, Reynolds, Beymer, and a few citizens from the community. He stated that he had sent the draft of the planning document to the members through email but would send the draft again to those who did not receive it. A meeting date is to be established.

Wilson discussed the options for a restaurant development at Park Plaza. He stated that he had received good ideas from going to the restaurant show in Chicago. One suggestion from many of the individuals he spoke to suggested the attendance to the Restaurant Finance and Development Conference scheduled for November 9th-11th. The Board requested Wilson to get additional information on the conference and present it at the September meeting.

Reynolds asked Wilson about the letter that he had received from Mr. and Mrs. Smits regarding the need for a dog park in Lansing. Reynolds inquired as to what it would cost the park district to implement one and where would it go. There was discussion of a fee-based system with a key card needed to open the gate. Reynolds asked turning part of Winterhoff Park into a dog park with Wilson stating no, that it would not work because people are already not cleaning up after their dogs on the bike trail. Wilson told the board that part of the bike trail grant from the state includes putting stations “dog bags” on the trail for people to clean up after their dogs. Flanagin discussed the idea of using Bernice Park. Wilson will investigate the idea of a dog park within the Park District facilities.

The board discussed the 3 different fitness specials that the park district offers throughout the year. Wilson stated that there is usually a fitness special in May, during the fall, and January. He asked the board what fall special they would like to run. Beymer explained that he did not think there should be a January 2 for 1 special for current members. He discussed only having the special for new members. Wilson replied that it would be a big financial loss if the annual January special were not offered. He explained that by running the special in January 2008, the promotion brought in over \$116,000 in

revenue and retained over 565 members from the year before. Beymer stated that because people expect the special to be run again in January, they would wait until the special comes around and sign up instead of paying full price. Primack stated that the number of fitness members acquired from the January special is irrelevant, and that only the money generated is important. Primack discussed the option of offering the 2 for 1 special in a different month. Wilson stated that the best month for people to buy fitness memberships is in January, right after the holidays and with the “new year resolution” on their mind. Leck brought up the fact that there could be a chance of a loss of revenue if the January special is not run. Wilson explained that the fees to the fitness center have not been raised in over 2 years. Primack stated that the board needs to look at the total amount of revenue, the number of uses per year to get the per use visit amount.

Flanagin asked if Bally’s fitness center offered specials. Wilson replied yes. Wilson again stated that in January 2008 over 500 people came back to the fitness center from the year before. Leck stated that it would be taking a chance not to run the January special and that the money is needed to operate. Wilson explained that the budget for the year is based on the revenue brought in from that special.

Primack inquired about fitness members that use ACH as their payment method. He brought up an idea about changing the ACH contract to have an automatic renewal at the existing rate. Wilson explained that the expiration date is now on member cards and that renewal reminder postcards are no longer sent out. Primack asked about the option of just sending out a renewal bill to current members to see how many would just pay the bill. Beymer stated that he would be willing to take a chance and not run the special in January.

Reynolds explained that for the last three years since running the special in January revenue has gone up and wondered if the park district should take the risk in not running the special or just stick with the proven method.

Flanagin discussed the need for the board to look into running the 2 for 1 special before any decision is made. Leck stated that it is wrong to stop the January special due to the current economy state. Flanagin stated that the board needed to look at the financial information based on user numbers and also look at fees of other facilities.

Wilson asked who would be attending the Park Plaza dedication on October 4th. Flanagin, Beymer, Leck, and Primack all said they would be in attending. The agenda for the dedication was briefly discussed.

Wilson stated that the brick pavers would start after the dedication ceremony. Leck discussed placing a sign-up table for people to purchase the bricks and that a flyer would need to be made for passing out to the public. Wilson explained that he did not have time to make up a flyer. Reynolds offered to call the brick company to discuss the purchasing of the bricks. Wilson gave Reynolds the brick company's number. Leck, Reynolds, and Primack all said that they would sit at the table and take orders for the bricks. Wilson stated that the cost of the brick has not be determined for could be in the \$150-200 per brick range, they are sold in lots of. Primack stated that he would prepare the form for people to purchase the bricks.

Flanagin asked who would be attending the SSSRA golf outing on September 12th. Wilson stated that Desjardins and Havran would be helping out at the outing and he would be attending the function.

Wilson told the board that the park district did receive confirmation that the \$1M grant would be available form the Illinois Department of Transportation for the Pennsy Greenway Spur. The grant funds come from monies that Congressman Jackson secured to complete various gaps in the Grand Illinois Trail system in the south suburban area. The majority of the gaps that these funds were going to completed have already been completed or another agency has committed to complete the gap making the grant funds from Jackson available. The Park District will use the grant funds for the Spur and what grant dollars are not spent will be transferred to another agency for funding of bike trails. Wilson stated that the grant is 80/20 between the local agency and federal government.

Reynolds discussed the damage to the fence prongs at the Buford Walker home that was caused by the park district. Wilson updated the board on the matter.

Leck inquired about the meeting with the village regarding the bike path on Wentworth Avenue. The Park District has 2 plans for the bike path. Plan A would have the trail on east side of Wentworth going south from the Pennsy to the ComEd property then west on the ComEd property to the forest preserve property, then south to the existing Thorn Creek trail on Glenwood-Lansing Road. Plan B would have the trail going

south on Wentworth Avenue from the Pennsy to Glenwood-Lansing Road then west on Glenwood-Lansing Road using the right of way to the existing Thorn Creek Trail.

Wilson stated that he and Joe Nordman met with representatives of IDOT regarding the drainage problem at Winterhoff Park. The natural drainage had been disturbed once the railroad embankment was removed. Wilson explained the outcome he was trying to accomplish by using the existing CMAQ funds to pay for this drainage problem that was caused by the remove of the berm during the construction of the bike trail.

Motion made by Leck to accept the Treasurers Report as presented. Second by Beymer. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Reynolds, Beymer, Leck, Flanagan. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Kuniej presented her report. She reported that not all tax money has been received. Flanagan asked Kuniej about the 2nd installment of tax bills with Kuniej reporting that she did not believe that they had gone out yet. She stated that the tax bills would need to be received by September 1st in order to receive the money by October 1st.

Kuniej stated that the general fund was budgeted to lose \$10,000. Wilson replied that the fund was not budgeted for a deficit, which was shown in the operating report. Kuniej stated that she would be surprised if the general fund breaks even at the years end. It was stated that the general fund lost \$3200 last year.

Wilson discussed the damages from the storm on August 4th and stated that some things were not covered by insurance. He had to purchase chainsaws and the staff worked overtime to clean up the debris. He also stated that a professional tree company would be needed to clean up some of the trees at the parks and that it would be a big expense for the park district. He explained that there was roof damage at the Eisenhower Center when an air-conditioning unit was pushed off of its base

Primack presented his report. Primack discussed the Intergovernmental Agreement for Police Services draft and stated that there is an issue in that the park district cannot participate in the Village of Lansing’s administrative system. He explained that any tickets written for ordinance violations in the name of the park district would have to be processed through the Circuit Court of Cook County and not the Village of Lansing. He explained that there was a discussion of the village adopting certain park

ordinances where the police can write their own tickets and process them through their own courts. The revenue that would be generated from the ticket fines would have to go to the Village of Lansing. Primack asked if all of the Commissioners were ok with that option and all agree.

Primack discussed the litigation involving a subcontractor from United Energy Solutions. Primack explained there had been a suit filed against the park district and the general contractor.

Primack discussed the referendum, which would increase the limiting rate by .10 (10 cents) per \$1,000 EAV for a one time permanent increase. He explained that the 10-cent increase would raise over \$400,000 for the park district on an annual basis. He also explained that that would translate into an extra \$16.00 of property taxes on a \$100,000 fair market value home. Flanagin stated that in 2004 the tax rate was .345 and in 2006 the tax rate was 0.28, which it still is 12 years later due to tax caps. Flanagin also stated that the best time for a referendum is in the April primaries and not during a general election.

Flanagin stated that the referendum should be put on the November election ballot even though it may be the worst time to ask for an increase. He commented the park district should let people know what they are up against. Flanagin also stated that there are 3 TIF districts that have had tax caps since 1994. He stated that the park district is in the same financial constraints as the people at home. Leck asked the board if the park district could promote the referendum and let people know about the financial situation of the park district. Wilson responded by stating that the park district cannot lobby but can advocate. He explained that the park district cannot say, "vote yes". Wilson reminded the Board that this matter was brought to their attention many months ago with no action being taken. With a possible decision to approve the concept of a referendum for November, there is really no time to put information together showing our needs to educate the public about the needs in the parks and facilities and the referendum. Leck asked if the referendum should wait until April 2009 with Wilson replying that there is no good time for a referendum and that would be a Board decision. Beymer responded by stating that it can't hurt to ask the taxpayers for the increase. Reynolds agreed with Beymer. Wilson stated that if the referendum was put on the ballot for this November and it fails, the board should wait until the primary election in 2010.

Motion made by Leck to accept the Ordinance providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of increasing the limiting rate for the Lan-Oak Park District, Cook County, Illinois, to the voters of said Park District at the general election to be held on the 4th day of November, 2008. Second by Reynolds. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Beymer, Leck, Reynolds, Flanagin. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Wilson discussed the draft of the letter that would be sent out to the homeowners adjacent to the Pennsy Greenway. It was suggested by President Flanagin that the letter would be signed by the Board of Commissioners and not just by the President. Wilson explained that some homeowners are using park district property along the Pennsy Greenway for gardens and their own personal use destroying the existing vegetation.

There being no further business, Motion made by Reynolds to adjourn the meeting. Second by Flanagin. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Leck, Reynolds, Beymer, Flanagin. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Wilson, CPRP
Secretary to the Board of Commissioners