

Winnemac Park Advisory Council  
 Monthly Meeting Minutes  
 Tuesday August 15<sup>th</sup> – 6pm

**Members Present ✓:**

✓	Manny Vega	✓	Deb Miretzky
✓	Dave Miretzky	✓	Anne Sylvan
	Cathy Vega	✓	Johanna Raimond (WP Tennis) (New Member)
✓	Amy Wiliamson (Nature Committee)	✓	Dinakar Vinnakota (New Member)
✓	Elvia Heneghan (Amundson Athletics)	✓	Christian Blume (New Member)
	Margaret OConor (TIF Committee)	✓	Russ Klettke, (WP 4 <sup>th</sup> For All) (New Member)
	Anne Ryane (Web Site Committee)	✓	Claire Howard (substitute Secretary) (New Member)

**Chicago Park District Representation ✓:**

✓	Greg Czajkowski (CPD Area Manager)	✓	Lisa Ragucci (CPD Park Supervisor)

**Guests ✓:**

✓	Andre Vasquez (40 <sup>th</sup> Ward Alderperson)	✓	Paul Slomski (Fitness court)
✓	Kristi Eilers (CPS Amundson Principal)	✓	David Chinchilla (Amundson Athletics)

Manny Vega called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05pm.

**Public comment** – Signups 1 individual signed up to speak for 2 minutes:

Opened meeting with a public comment from Russ Klettke regarding 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks. Russ presented evidence of the detriment of fireworks to humans, wild life and air quality. Russ also presented a brief history of the fireworks in the park, explained that the fireworks are against the law, and commented on the 2023 efforts to mitigate the fireworks in the park. He presented the results of a documented but informal survey he conducted in 2020 (531 respondents) about the fireworks. 50% were ok with them, 19% hated them, 31% were accepting of them if permitted and insurance. Had a brief discussion of insurability of fireworks. Russ closed with asking WPAC to formally adopt a position of “no fireworks” in the park ever.

Introductions were conducted (names listed above).

Manny addressed meeting norms; the meeting follows Robert’s Rules and codes of conduction for communication/discussions were presented.

The meeting minutes for June 14<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously by members in good standing.

The agenda for the evening was approved with the change that Greg Czajkowski would speak first to talk about Tennis court announcement & TIF discussion due to a schedule conflict.

**Tennis court announcement & TIF discussion**

**Pickleball Tennis Court Discussion:** Greg Czajkowski, the Chicago Park District Area Manager informed the WPAC that the CPD on behalf of the Pickleball Mania Program has targeted tennis courts at Winnemac Park. Greg, during the meeting, was informing WPAC of this renovation and asked for feedback on exactly the shape of the renovation. Johanna representing Tennis players at Winnemac Park spoke of the concerns to the loss of the current court use amenity of tennis. After much discussion, the group voted and approved a renovation plan renovating the west tennis court as a tennis only court with only tennis court markings and the east court would be renovated to a mult- use court to accommodate tennis and pickleball via court markings. WPAC agreed to issue a renovation

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advisory statement on behalf of the community and the WPAC to Maria Stone before the 8/24/23 close of community feedback. It was after the meeting that Maria Stone confirmed that the source of funding of the renovations would be the \$175,000 TIF funds already approved by the city. This was a correction to Greg's claim that the Pickleball Mania Program was self-funded.

**New business:**

A. **Bathrooms:** Per Lisa Ragucci of CPD, the staffing of the bathroom at Jorndt Stadium is the responsibility of CPS. Per Dave Miretzky, the bathrooms used to be open until 7pm and on the weekends. CPD is interviewing candidates for an additional staff position for the park. The group discussed the immediate need for porta-toilets if the bathrooms cannot be opened. Amy Williamson suggested that CPD contact the Welles Park Baseball Association since it is their kids/families that need bathrooms. Greg C. agreed to talk with them and suggest it be part of next year's agreement (that the Association will provide porta-toilets). Alderman Vasquez agreed to keep pressure on CPS to try to get the stadium bathrooms opened, and for CPS to staff them. A short group conversation on if the Peoples Budget could be used for porta-toilets. Alderman Vasquez summarized the process for the selecting projects to be funded by the Peoples Budget. His office is looking for participants/reviewers.

B. **Peoples Budget and Fitness Court Discussion:** Elvia Heneghan and Paul Slomski described what a fitness court is and how beneficial having one in the park could be for students and community members. Paul presented illustrations, with the idea that the Peoples Budget could be used to fund the created of a fitness court. There was a group discussion about where within the park/campus the court could be located. The cost of creating it would approximate \$200k. BCBS-IL has a grant program, Paul a grant writer offered his services to seek grant funding; it is conceivable that BCBS-IL may contribute about \$50k. The question arose about if the TIF money could be used as well, this line item does not appear in the approved TIF and would not be possible. Alderman Vasquez mentioned community concerns about the cannibalization of green space.

C. **July 4th, 2024 planning:** Russ Klettke agreed to head a WPAC committee to start planning on alternative activities in the park for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 2024. The committee name: Winnemac 4<sup>th</sup> for All

D. **Fundraising:** For the sake of time, we deferred to discuss Fund raising opportunities until the September meeting. A committee will be formed to discuss future opportunities.

E. **Donations to the WPAC :** A park bench has been offered to the Park buy a community member. Discussions with Lisa Ragucci will occur outside of the meeting via email.

**Old business:**

**Domain/Website hosting budget** was proposed by Manny Vega for Year 1 = \$110. Year 2 = \$235 with a current vendor /s being reviewed; currently Go Daddy and or HostGator. The motion passed unanimously to allow the spend and set up the accounts/transfer under WPAC. Anne Ryan (not present) and Manny Vega are in the process of finalizing vendor selection and Anne will act as the volunteer administrator manage the site.

**Bylaws:** Manny Vega and Dave Miretzky are updating the WPAC bylaws. This update will be completed soon and presented to members (via email) to then vote on approving.

**Open Position/s:**

The position of Treasurer is open. Manny described the responsibilities, how the Chicago Parks Foundation is the non-profit sponsoring WPAC, and how the funds are held at Fifth Third Bank.

- Manny asked for nominations and two new members, Claire Howard and Dinakar Vinaka nominated themselves for the role and provided a brief introduction. Claire later withdrew.

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- Voting will be held at the September 13th, 6pm meeting.
- An open position for a FOIA officer was also announced.

**Park Supervisor Report:** Lisa Ragucci

- Start of youth programs occurring at Chappell Elementary
- August 19, 20, 26, 27, curtain: 6:30 Toys! by smcplays.org; Amundson new principal, Kristi Eilers, offered use of marquee for announcements.
- During July, many trees were mulched by the local Tree Keeper’s
- National Night Out occurred August 1<sup>st</sup> with a larger turn out than usual. A WPAC table might be a good idea for next year’s event.

**Committee reports:**

**Nature:** Greg Czajkowski shared that the park got more garbage cans but that they must remain along the walkways in order for them to be emptied.

**TIF:** Alderman Vasquez and Greg Czajkowski mentioned that the timing of the larger TIF park renovation was design in Q1 CY24, build/renovate in Q2 CY24. CPD spends the funds first and then is later reimbursed by the TIF

**Safety:** For the sake of time the Safety report from the Chicago Police was to be provided with the meeting minutes. Provided is activity in Winnemac Park between 01JUL23 - 15AUG23.

Count	Activity / Incident	Note
3	Traffic	
2	Check the Well Being	
2	Fire	
2	Info for Police	
1	Animal Abuse	1 (19P) C/S F/B - AFRO - THIN - YOUNG LOOKING PUT TWO DOGS INSIDE OF A NISSAN QUEST - DARK IN COLOR - PLATE #CZ5192 ALL THE WINDOWS ARE UP - VEH IS PARKED OFF THE ALLEY - ON THE WEST SIDE OF STREET - FACING SOUTH OFF WENT INSIDE OF A BACK ALLEY GATE INTO ABOVE LOCATION NFI
1	Assault in Progress	CS F/W WEARING BLU SHIRT HAS BICYCLE RECORDING AND STATING SHE WILL CALL POLICE IF HE DOESN'T LEAVE PARK WITH HIS FAMILY...NFI
1	Assault Just Occurred	CS F/W WEARING BLU SHIRT HAS BICYCLE RECORDING AND STATING SHE WILL CALL POLICE IF HE DOESN'T LEAVE PARK WITH HIS FAMILY...NFI
1	Crim Damage to Property	
1	Disturbance Mental	
1	DUI	
1	Fireworks	

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1	Municipal Complaint	
1	Park check	
1	ARRESTS	AGG UUW in VEH - this was actually on a traffic stop at Foster/Damen (not in park)
1	ISR	Dog off leash in tennis court
1	Crime Incident	Sexual Assault - Victim and Offender knew each other

**Fund raising Winnemac Park :**

- A donation of \$250 is due to arrive in September to act as seed funding for the newly reignited PAC. This will bring the total amount of donations currently held at the CPF to \$425. The funds will be the initial seed funding at our bank account with 5/3<sup>rd</sup> Bank

**Youth Garden:** Report submitted by Mike Roach not present (highlights shared)

- The Winnemac Park Youth Garden is again designated as an official Community Garden in the Parks and has been nominated for a Chicago Excellence in Gardening award. Judges visited the garden in July and we find out in September if we won.
- Youth Garden Fund raising: SideShow Gelato (at 4819 N. Western Ave.) chose the Youth Garden as the August beneficiary of their World’s Smallest Cone charity project. Now through Aug. 31, simply donate \$1 (or more) at the scoop shop’s & you’ll score a bite-sized cone of SideShow’s yummy gelato & all proceeds raised during August will be donated to the Winnemac Park Youth Garden.
- Vandalism and Theft: FYI, vandals destroyed two of our dozen children’s artwork piece in the garden and thieves continue to steal veggies, as well as donated tools and pinwheels (which we use to help ward off hungry squirrels) ... hence, why we need all of the Gelato-eating fund-raising help we can muster.
- The park district via the “Community Gardens in the Parks” staff plan to install a small permanent sign recognizing us as an official Community Garden in the Parks garden. They say that the sign (once installed) should help deter theft as folks realize that we are a community garden and tend to leave stuff alone.
- Anonymous donors, in the last few weeks, have left new tools and fertilizer in our garden storage bin. Three hoses were also donated on Earth Day.

Adjourn: Manny Vega moved to adjourn the meeting and Johanna Raimond seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried. Adjourned at approximated 7:40pm

**Announcements:**

**Next Monthly Meeting: The next WPAC meeting will be Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 6PM in the Amundsen HS Rm 118 meeting room.**

**Run for the Parks 5K September 10th 8AM - 12PM • Burnham Park at 31st Street Beach**

**Use code *CPF10* for \$10 off your registration!**

**<https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Chicago/RunfortheParks5k1>**

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Summary of Action Items:

1. WPAC will issue a statement about the court renovation to Maria Stone the community feedback 8/24/23 meeting. ✓
2. WPAC will determine viability of Hostgator or similar vendor for web-hosting. **In process.**
3. WPAC will put notice of the play Toys on the Instagram account. ✓
4. WPAC will finalize draft of bylaws, distribute to members, & hold a vote to approve. **In process.**
5. WPAC will follow up on picnic bench donation proposed. **In process.**
6. WPAC will plan for election of Treasurer to the board at the September meeting. ✓
7. WPAC gained 5 new members during the meeting. ✓
8. Attached revised court rendering to meeting minutes. ✓