

Winnemac Park Advisory Council  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 14, 2024 – 6:15pm  
Claddagh Ring

**Registered Members Present ✓:**

	Name	V		Name	V
✓	Manny Vega (President)	Y		Anne Sylvan (Field/Grounds Committee)	Y
E	Dinakar Vinnakota (Treasurer) (Administration Committee) (excused medical)	Y		Margaret O’Conor (Field Improvement / TIF Committee)	N
E	Cathy Vega (Secretary) (excused medical)	Y		Johanna Raimond (WP Tennis)	N
✓	Amy Williamson (Nature Committee)	Y	✓	Mike Lonergan (late arrival)	Y
	Elvia Heneghan (Fund Raising Committee)	Y		Kristen Lonergan	Y
✓	Jacob Schuster (Administration Committee)	Y		Christian Blume	N
	David Cady Jr. (Performing Arts in the Park Committee)	Y		Eleanor Arnold	N
✓	Mary O’Connor (FFA24 Service Sourcing)	Y		Alyssa Edes	N
✓	Russ Klettke (FFA24 Communication)	Y		Mike O’Keefe	N
✓	Dave Miretzky	Y	✓	Sarah Harpring – Meeting Minutes 8/14/2024	N
✓	Deb Miretzky	N	✓	Tessa Groll	N
				Jayson von Osinski	N

**Chicago Park District Representation ✓:**

✓	Lisa Ragucci (CPD Park Supervisor)		

**Community ✓:**

✓	Cat Sharp, 40 <sup>th</sup> Ward		
✓	Mike Kraetsch		
✓	Barbara Kraetsch		

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### Opening Discussion

- It was noted that there was not a quorum of WPAC board members present at the meeting  
6 voting members present at the time of announcement 7 needed to have quorum
- There was conversation on if we can keep moving forward at meetings, possibly voting, when necessary, if there is not consistently a quorum
- Question was asked: Is Zoom an option so that there are multiple ways to attend?  
→ This was mentioned previously in an email  
→ This might help with accessibility  
→ There were concerns about sound/audio quality, and that those attending the meetings through Zoom may not be able to hear much else other than the person closest to the device hosting the Zoom call
- Email issues happening, the board's email has been blocking emails, seemingly since a security update
- There was general inquiry as to whether the WPAC website is up-to-date, if all of the documents posted are up-to-date

### OLD BUSINESS

#### 4th for All Event

- Special shout-outs were given to Alvia, Russ, Dave, Jacob, 40th Ward Office, Manny, Deb, and Mary for making the event happen, and thanks to all who helped with the event!
- Community members were excited, some arrived at 8am the morning of to set up chairs
- What went well?  
→ All activities during the day went well  
→ Disc golf was great, including kids in disc golf was great  
→ Kona Ice was there the longest of the vendors, they made around \$3,500 and WPAC made 20% of that back  
→ Full Moon Jam was beyond expectation  
→ Food vendors all went well, all seemed interested in returning for future events  
→ Empanadas sold out  
→ Reggie's mentioned how much they enjoyed interacting with our neighbors (which WPAC attendees' thought was a great sign and said a lot about our neighborhood), had the slowest service, but great food

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→ Reggie's estimated that we had around 2,000 people who attended the event

→ While organized activities were happening in the park, there was much less firework activity, and there seemed to be less fireworks overall

→ The strolling accordion player was a huge hit, there was a suggestion to hire 2 or 3 next year

→ The puppet bike was a huge hit, typically works for tips but there was a suggestion that we throw him a bone and try to ensure he comes back next year—many people (both online and in-person) talked about him being something they were especially excited to see and part of the reason they were planning to attend the 4th for All event.

- What can be improved?

→ Having no fireworks in the park seemed to push much of the activity into the neighborhoods and alleys, and seemed to push the activity later into the night than usual

→ Fireworks were reportedly being set off on the northside of the park, and near some natural areas, past 11pm

→ Many individuals shared that they asked for support from the police with firework management before and during the event, but there was little response and little action taken (some individuals were told directly by police that they had not been instructed to stop people from shooting off fireworks)

- Full Moon Jam Discussion

→ When hiring Full Moon Jam (FMJ), there is also a requirement to hire two people from Luna Security

→ FMJ has volunteers who are trained in de-escalation, mediation, and bystander intervention called "Guardians," they invited us to get training too

→ Trainings happen approximately 3 times a year, next training is THIS Sunday (8/18) at 8pm

→ It was mentioned that next year we might plan to have a training specifically leading up our next 4th for All event that some of our volunteers should be sure to attend

→ A representative for FMJ was present at the meeting

→ The FMJ representative said that the event went well from their group's perspective, and we are already penciled into their calendar for next year's event on Friday 7/4/2025

→ Some suggestions from the FMJ representative for next year included considering vests for volunteers to look more official, posting warning signs that directly say fireworks are illegal and punishable by a \$2,500 fine, possibly getting training specifically in firework safety, and considering offering an option for fireworks in a controlled environment at/near the park since it seems to be something people are going to do anyway

→ FMJ representative reported that after attending National Night Out (with FMJ providing free entertainment at the event), FMJ was told by the police sergeant that the police will provide support next year

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- Disc Golf Discussion

→Manny mentioned that there were over 200 disc golf attendees, and estimated 70% were there from the Chicago Disc Golf Authority, 30% our neighborhood

→Mike was present and gave a report/review of the day for the disc golf activities

→Some disc golf participants arrived early in the day to study the course

→Many kids participated and really got into it

→135 participants officially signed up, 70-80 stopped by to join in unofficially

→Terry Miller is considered one of the most famous disc golf players in the game, and he came out to participate

→A family from Austin, TX was visiting relatives in town and came out to Winnemac specifically when they heard the disc golf event was happening

→Many others in passing mentioned that they wished they had known this was happening and would have brought their gear/planned to participate

→Disc golf volunteers had shirts on that read “Volunteer,” due to that, they ended up receiving many questions all day about the general 4th for All event

→Disc golf is certainly being considered to come back for next year’s 4th for All event, and there is already a plan forming for another disc golf event later this year (see “New Business” section)

- There was discussion on the overall goals of the event, and the long-term goals for firework activity

→We raised and spent \$10,000 on this event

→Some expressed an objective of 100% fireworks elimination in Winnemac Park, reminded that fireworks are illegal, mentioned that there are 12 other places in the city that one can go to watch fireworks, and shared an expectation of “human safety and laws enforced”

→Some reported that there are neighbors who are “pissed” that fireworks were not a part of the program offered

→Some heard from community members that they thought the daytime events were great, and saw them as a “pregame” to the fireworks, looking forward to the combo again next year

→It was mentioned that Winnemac Park means many things to many people, and that WPAC is here to make the park better, we are all volunteers, not enforcers—enforcement is the police’s job

→Some thought that at the end of the day, people will find a way to shoot off fireworks if that is what they are wanting to do

→Manny shared that there will be some changes to the landscape next year, including 1 diamond getting lights—if those lights are on during the night of the 4th of July, people will likely not find the idea of shooting off fireworks there very exciting

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- It was mentioned that next year will be 250th Anniversary of the park, and that could draw extra-large crowds, we should be prepared It was suggested and agreed upon that we make a committee for next year's 4th for All event now so that we can get ahead with our planning, that committee will be discussed at the September meeting

- Bathrooms

- This is our big push, trying to get proper staffing

- Staffing for bathrooms was not previously allocated in park district budget line

- Currently approaching budget season

- There has been much back and forth with the Chicago Parks District and Chicago Public Schools about who covers security and when, they say they have reached an agreement

→Potentially CPS on weekdays and Parks on weekends?

#### Water Feature in Playground

- Question was asked: has there been any more thought on a water feature in the playground area? Nothing fancy, water runs in from the drinking fountains anyway (perhaps a splash pad?)

- Response: Every year there is \$1.5 million allotted to each alderman/ward called the "People's Budget" which is used for a variety of things including but not limited to paving streets, painting murals, and adding features to the parks

→A water feature in the playground area could be submitted as a suggestion for a project funded by the People's Budget

→These projects must be considered "permanent" (which is defined as lasting at least 5 years)

→These projects must be on Chicago city property (such as CPS grounds, sidewalks, Chicago playgrounds, Chicago parks, etc.)

→Funds cannot be used for staffing

→There is a form to submit project suggestions that is open until the end of August

→There is a committee of 17 community members that select from submissions (usually around 60 suggestions submitted)

→Top 5 suggestions end up on a ballot that is voted on

→Committee often aims to include projects from a variety of areas throughout the ward, and a variety of types of projects throughout the years

→Government office will want to mix up what types of projects are funded each year

→The idea of a basketball court in Winnemac Park was mentioned, and would be welcome to be included in a submission as an idea for the People's Budget

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- It was suggested that we as an advisory council and neighbors can also fundraise independently, and use those funds as we see fit for various projects, we are not solely dependent on the People's Budget to make projects happen in Winnemac Park Contracts
  - There are 4 or 5 field projects in the works
  - August 19th fencing will go up, work will start soon after
  - Kate is project manager
  - It was noted that there has been an internal release of knowledge, so this should all be public information at this point
  - Question was asked: will everything expected to get done this year actually get done?
  - Response: These projects are funded through TIFF (tax independent financial fund) which has hard "sunset date", all must be 100% done December 31st
- It was noted that the funding for the Western Brown Line construction is through TIFF

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### Movies/Short Films in the Park

- There is no free movie in the park this year
  - Opportunity through Chicago Onscreen team (Jon Ravenscroft) to host short film event August 26th (Monday) 6-9pm
- For the last 11 years, 6 or 7 other parks have hosted this event which showcases local film makers' works over the course of a week and a half through free screenings in parks across Chicago (this year August 26-31)
- Films are more likely intended for adults; event not geared towards kids
- There is no cost to us, though we might want to use it as an opportunity to fundraise
- Ask a coffee truck to attend? Sell popcorn?
- Cannot sell alcohol as we would need a permit, and it is too close to the event to secure a permit
- Manny has already been in touch with Block Club Chicago to promote the event, article should run on Thursday (8/22)

##### Fall Disc Golf Event

- Another disc golf event is in the works for this fall
- November is likely the most ideal time due to fall baseball starting next week and ending in October
- It was mentioned that maybe it could be a "turkey" themed event
- Every event needs its own permit so we cannot reuse permit from 4th for All event
- Manny and Mike will chat separately about starting November event planning

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