

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BERKELEY PARK DISTRICT
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
Lind Park, Berkeley, Illinois

The special meeting of the commissioners of the Berkeley Park District was held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at Berkeley Park District's Lind Park building. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call, Commissioners present: M. Sada, R. Sudduth, M. Carpenter, Commissioner P Smith, and President T. Larem.

Other Park District Officials present: Attorney S. Posey, Treasurer Art Schenone, Consulting Director D. Schimmel.

Guests Present: Tamara Notter, Ellen Conlin, Lisa Mikow, Roger Thomas, David Ditchfield, and Fran Sloss. Also attending was Ray Ochromowicz of Executive Decisions.

Consulting Director Schimmel introduced Ray Ochromowicz to the Board and to the guests attending the meeting. Schimmel explained that the purpose of the meeting was to gather more input so that the Board could complete a Strategic Plan for the park district. Ray explained that his job was to facilitate the process. This meeting was the last of three meetings held to collect input from residents, business leaders and government leaders. Major topics to be discussed included what the group considered as:

- Elements of a Mission Statement for the Berkeley Park District
- Values of the Berkeley Park District
- Goals within the major functions of the Park District (Administrative/Finance, Recreation, Parks/Maintenance)

In addition, Ray led the group in completing a S.W.O.T. Analysis of the Park District (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

Mission Statement – Ray solicited elements of a Mission Statement emphasizing that this is to determine the purpose of the Berkeley Park District. Elements brought forth included:

- Opportunities for recreation and for community connections
- Accessibility to programs and facilities
- Preservation of green space
- Protection of public resources
- Offer indoor and outdoor activities.
- Assure good stewardship of taxpayer investment.
- Provide opportunities for personal growth.

After identifying the elements of our Mission, he asked the group to rank the elements.

Values – Ray explained that he wanted the group to determine how the park district board and staff should go about its business. What did we stand for?

Togetherness
Transparency
Collaboration
Fun
Integrity
Respect
Affordability
Quality
Service

High standards
Sense of Pride
Prompt Response
Customer Satisfaction
Accountability
Visibility
Reflects the Community
Personal Development

After identifying the Values, Ray had the group rank the Values they thought to be most important.

Goals – Ray identified three major “function” areas for the park district. With each area, he asked the group to identify the most critical goals for each function.

Administration/Finance

Leadership in planning
Facilitate achieving mission.
ROI for stakeholders
Financial stability and growth
Collaboration
Transparency
Fiscal responsibility
Capital Improvement Plan

Recreation

Variety
Programs for all age groups
Special Events
Family/Community Connection
Wide range of interests
Collaboration and Partnerships to bring more programs.
Comprehensive marketing plan

Parks & Maintenance

Maintain Equipment & Facilities
Cleanliness
Safety – including regular inspections.
Open and available
Beautification

After identifying these goal areas, Ray had the group identify the most important goals.

Next, Ray led the group in the SWOT Analysis. The purpose is to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities with an emphasis on enhancing the strengths and placing the district in the best

position it can to take advantage of opportunities. Obviously, you want to improve on your weaknesses but it should be recognized that some of Berkeley's weaknesses cannot be readily changed (size, number of residents, tax base).

Strengths

Board Diversity – represents the community.

Community Diversity

Programs are affordable.

Special events are good.

The Board has a new vision, looking forward.

Berkeley Park – jewel of the community

Completed its Master Plan recently.

Weaknesses

Finances

Lack of staffing

Not well organized

Too expensive

Not a lot of variety

Lack of Marketing

Community is not well-informed of the challenges facing the park district as an organization.

Lack of a good maintenance plan – building and grounds.

Opportunities

Alternative revenue streams

Creating a plan and prioritizing

Partnerships/collaboration (schools, village, library)

Growth through visibility, having the Board more involved in the community builds support.

Engagement by the Board in other groups

Access to the schools

Increase community involvement in the park district.

Because we were running out of time, Ray opted not to go into the Threats portion of the SWOT analysis. Again, we ranked the areas the group wanted the most attention given.

Ray noted that because of our financial and staffing difficulties, our major threat is the loss of “market share.” The ability to mount programs that compete with our neighbors or other groups. It is therefore important to plot our efforts in ways that we can be successful and not spread ourselves too thin.

Essentially this concluded the initial efforts at gathering input. Ray will complete his initial summary and will present his findings at the January Board Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Submitted by Consulting Director Dan Schimmel on December 18, 2023.