

THE PRAIRIE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) MEETING
Kennedy Park Fieldhouse, 11320 S. Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643
Park Supervisor, Rebecca Medrano (312-747-6198)
Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 6:30 PM
IN-PERSON MEETING ONLY

M I N U T E S

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 20

PAC BOARD:

Charles Williams President
Ivette Williams Secretary

Lorraine Linnerud Vice President
Milton Chandler Treasurer

PARK SUPERVISOR:

Rebecca Medrano

STATE REPRESENTATIVE:

Guest: Rep. Justin Slaughter, 27th District

PAC Members:

JoAnn Altenbach
Rosa Barajas
Dorothy Chandler
Maryann Drake
Julie Karstrand
Birgit LaVoie
Tom Lavoie

Rod Myles
Dan Niersbach
Gregory Pitts
Charmaine Sevier
Becky Stevens
Guest: Mike Martin, Flag Football Coach
Guest: Kevin O’Kelly, St. Barnabas Soccer Coach

I. WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM by Charles Williams.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (2-12-24)

Dorothy Chandler made a motion to accept Minutes, seconded by Milton Chandler.
All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT

Bank Statement: Bank Statement and Treasurer’s Report attached with detailed information. Milton Chandler also gave verbal summary of Treasurer’s report and PAC’s bank monthly activities from February 1-29, 2024. February’s beginning balance was \$2,039.39 & ending balance was \$2,035.20. There were no deposits, debit/credit transactions or outstanding checks written. SwipeSimple fees for previous month activities totaled: \$4.19.

IV. MOTION

Lorraine Linnerud explained the new guidelines in effect regarding fingerprinting to the PAC. Charles Williams proposed a motion to add the following language to our PAC By-Laws per Chicago Park District Guidelines:

“ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP, Section 2. Requirements.

The PAC shall consist of at least three (3) members, including the elected officers as defined in Article IV. Every member must complete a membership application. Any member whose work involves contact with children or any finances must submit a volunteer application to the Chicago Park District and will be asked to submit to a criminal background check.

All PAC officers and any frequent PAC members who volunteer should submit a volunteer application to the Chicago Park District, if they have not already done so, and complete the background check. Any volunteers who volunteer in PAC activities no more than two times a year should fill out the one day volunteer waiver.”

Motion accepted by Dorothy Chandler, seconded by Milton Chandler.

All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Garden Committee: D. Chandler – Committee full report attached. The Garden Committee is partnering with the Park Event Committee for Earth Day/Arbor Day on Sat., 4/20/24 from 9-12. Openlands TreeKeepers (Jim Battistoni & his team) will be focusing on tree trimming on Oakley and we will assist by hauling branches and placing in neat piles for pickup by park services. Field trips to be planned include: Hope Center in Blue Island (Lisa Adams), Field Museum Pollinator Gardens (Danielle Jones), Lake Katherine in Palos (John Smith). Jan Favia recommended we visit the MSI Exhibit running “The Blue Paradox” about the impact of plastics on our planet & steps to address it. Committee meeting to be scheduled soon at triangle to assess the garden. Received seeds from Sarah Batka, IL Extension and elderberry cuttings from Danielle Jones. QR code link to inaturalist site created by Danielle Jones displaying our garden with photos and the all the plants by scientific/common names. Link at bottom of page.
- Park Events Planning Committee: M. Dunneback – Committee full report attached. Rebecca Medrano has accepted all activity requests submitted for 2024 so far, which include: 4/6 kite fly; 4/20 Earth Day/Arbor Day park clean-up & providing assistance with tree trimming; 6/1 Meet & Greet & quick park clean-up an hour before; 7/5 post-holiday park clean-up; 8/10 Prairie Park Purge community garage sale in the park. Charles Williams will submit requests for liability insurance for events that require it.
- Park Investment Committee: L. Linnerud – Committee full report attached. Request for BUILD Illinois Bond Fund was initiated in 10/2022. In August 2022, Charles, Williams, Lorraine Linnerud, Ivette Williams met with Rep. Slaughter at Ald. O’Shea’s office to discuss OSLAD & BUILD Illinois grants and logistics on how to proceed. When OSLAD grant was not approved last year, the BUILD Illinois was fast tracked to move forward by the Chicago Park District, sponsored by Rep. Slaughter in Springfield. In February, 2024, we received word that the \$500K grant was awarded for our park. Everything has been signed off and is in the queue awaiting a project manager. It is not a matching grant, but would cover the top three improvements: walking path, dim lighting, and a water source. Next step is waiting for project manager to be assigned to handle design and construction. A press release was included with group photo with Rep. Slaughter in the Beverly Review and The Villager newspapers.
- Park Naming Committee: M. Drake – Park signs with new name are in process since name was officially approved on 2/14/24. The Chicago Park District will let us know so we can schedule ribbon cutting ceremony. Rebecca Medrano to inquire about the status.
- Public Safety Committee: M. Chandler – CAPS Meeting full report attached. Milton and Dorothy Chandler attended the CAPS Meeting on 3/7 in person at 22nd District facilitated by Officer Beamon and Sister Pat. Stats provided year to date from 1/1/24-3/6/24. Crime has significantly been reduced by comparing stats from 2023 during same period for better comparison. Vehicle safety event is being held on 4/27 at Jiffy Lube providing steering wheel locks to residents on a first come first-serve basis. Everyone is encouraged on creating a smart 911 profile and including your vehicle information. Speed cameras going up at 3 locations: St. John Fisher School, King Lockhart Memorial Park and Ridge Park/Beverly Montessori School. Meeting handouts included: community concern, sheet robbery prevention, anonymous tips/rewards, beat map, robbery prevention and package theft prevention tips. Next meeting is on May 2nd @ 6 pm at 22nd District.

VI. PAC BUSINESS

- FIFTH THIRD BANK Account Name Change: Charles Williams and Milton Chandler to go to bank in person with supporting documentation (Chicago Park District Hearing Minutes 2-14-24, website name change, etc.) to request name change of PAC account to reflect our new park name, The Prairie Park.
- IRS PAC Name Change: Park advisory name change from “PARK 581 Park Advisory Council” to new name: “The Prairie Park Advisory Council”. Waiting on bank account name change and statement (3/-31/24) with new change to process with IRS.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- PAC Logo Pens: Ivette Williams created a pen using our PAC logo and new park name, with new website/email information to gift to PAC members and send out with fundraising letters. Gift to PAC from Charles & Ivette Williams. Not submitting for reimbursement or in-kind donation. Any future orders will be processed through PAC account by Treasurer. Ivette was handing out pens to PAC members in attendance when Rep. Slaughter showed up to our meeting.
- PAC T-Shirts: Out of courtesy, due to Rep. Slaughter’s visit, this item has been moved to our **NEXT PAC MEETING** for discussion. Ivette Williams created a draft design using the online creator tool of Marketing Sportswear in Blue Island (it’s the same company BAPA, Smith Village, local businesses use). Marketing Committee had reviewed draft and preferred the blue design. We may switch to lighter color if PAC logo can be incorporated, problems with lettering and too many colors in design increase price). Nothing is decided yet. Goal is to create our first t-shirt to use for ribbon cutting ceremony so we all look uniform in group photo. Other design choices will be created later. Trying to keep cost down to \$20 per t-shirt.

VIII. STATUS OF GRANT(S)

- **BUILD Illinois Fund (\$500,000)**: Approved on 1/2024; joint effort of Chicago Park District & State Rep. Justin Slaughter. Waiting on next steps for project manager to be assigned to start work. Project scope: top 3 priority park improvements: walking path, lighting, and a water source. L. Linnerud (**APPROVED**)
- **CPF GRANT (\$1,000)**: Chicago Parks Foundation “2024 Connecting Communities” grant application was submitted online in February. Received prior approvals from Ald. O’Shea and park supervisor. Winners to be announced on 4/17/24 at their Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at South Shore Cultural Center. Project scope: creation of a prairie-like native & pollinator community garden and Monarch waystation at The Prairie Park in an underutilized site that would not interfere with sports or other activities across from existing community garden at SE triangle that was revitalized. I. Williams (**IN PROCESS**)
- **AARP FLAGSHIP GRANT (\$11,900) & MICROGRANT (\$2,500)**: AARP grant applications were submitted online in 2/24. Winners will be announced in mid-May. AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages (grant range is \$500-\$50,000). I. Williams (**IN PROCESS**)

IX. UPCOMING EVENTS

- TBD (MARCH/APRIL?): Once Chicago Park District park signs for our park are made and installed, Maria Stone will let us know when we can schedule a ribbon cutting ceremony so entire community is invited.
- MARCH: Chicago Park District’s Strategic Plan Townhall Meetings: (chicagoparkdistrict.com/strategic-plan): 3/18 (6-8 PM)-John Shedd Park; 3/20 (5-7 PM)-Marquette Park; 3/21 (6-8 PM)-Hamilton Park.

X. PARK SUPERVISOR

- Sports: Coach Mike Martin's flag football league to start on 4/28/24. Soccer season begins around same time. Rebecca Medrano invited coaches to PAC meeting (flag football & soccer). She will provide spring schedule of games/activities to PAC once finalized.
- Bicycle Rack: Rebecca to inquire about work order status for bike rack installation at 118th & Oakley (across from St. Walter parking lot).
- Fingerprinting: Question raised by one PAC member: Does being fingerprinted cross over to another park? Rebecca Medrano to inquire.

XI. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

No other additional business was discussed. Residential Zone Parking was briefly discussed after committee reports. Coaches agreed to talk to their sports parents before season begins regarding parking restrictions, no blocking of residential driveways or fire hydrants, and for all to adhere to zone parking and only park on street side of the park only. Rep. Justin Slaughter was invited to the PAC meeting and he stopped by to visit as we were starting to discuss new business so the Board then ceded the floor to Rep. Slaughter to address the PAC. Rep. Slaughter graciously took a group photo with us afterwards, which was included in a press release prepared by Lorraine Linnerud and subsequently submitted to the Beverly Review and The Villager newspapers. It was a celebratory meeting for our new park name received on 2/14/24 and recently learning that the park had been awarded the Build IL grant for \$500,000 spearheaded by Rep. Slaughter and Chicago Park District for the top three priority park improvements.

XII. NEXT PAC MEETING

The next monthly PAC Meeting is on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at 6:30 PM in person at the Kennedy Park Fieldhouse. The PAC Board meets each month two Saturdays before the monthly meeting to set the Agenda for the upcoming meeting. If you would like to add an item to the Agenda, please contact one of the PAC Board Officers below:

President	Charles Williams	[REDACTED]@aol.com
Vice-President	Lorraine Linnerud	[REDACTED]@gmail.com
Secretary	Ivette Williams	[REDACTED]@aol.com
Treasurer	Milton Chandler	[REDACTED]@gmail.com

XIII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM. Motion to adjourn was entered by Lorraine Linnerud, and seconded by Dan Niersbach.

Respectfully submitted: Ivette Williams, The Prairie PAC Board Secretary

Please visit the following pages:

- **THE PRAIRIE PARK WEBSITE:**
<http://ThePrairiePark.org>
 - **SWIPE SIMPLE ONLINE DONATION**
https://swipesimple.com/links/lnk_7ebae5d3
 - **PAC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTDUkAOCbB2HzVphMBTuSWsYeSrg-PO8JhUegNywBUyCv4Eg/viewform?usp=pp_url
- FACEBOOK PAGE**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1071695500392984>
 - INATURALIST (COMMUNITY GARDEN)**
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/the-prairie-previously-park-581>