

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, April 9, 2024, 6:30 PM

MINUTES

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 18

PAC BOARD:

Charles Williams President
Ivette Williams Secretary

Lorraine Linnerud Vice President
Milton Chandler Treasurer

PARK SUPERVISOR:

Rebecca Medrano

GUEST:

Renee Murphy Blackwelder Park

PAC Members:

JoAnn Altenbach
Rosa Barajas
Dorothy Chandler
Maryann Drake
Mary Dunneback
Rod Myles

Dan Niersbach
Joe Richmond
Jil Ross
Charmaine Sevier
Becky Stevens
John Yañez

I. WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM by Charles Williams.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (3-12-24): Charles Williams asked for a Motion to accept Minutes.

Motion accepted by Lorraine Linnerud; seconded by Joe Richmond. All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

III. NEW MEMBERS/GUESTS

Charles Williams welcomed new guest, Renee Murphy from Blackwelder Park. She is interested in starting a PAC at her park. Newest member to join our PAC is Gregory Pitts, which brings our PAC membership total to 41 members as of March 2024.

IV. MOTION

Lorraine Linnerud explained to members present the following Motions proposed for a PAC vote:

1) The first Motion proposed is to amend the PAC By-Laws document throughout to reflect our new park name approved on 2/14/2024. The By-Laws will be revised as follows: "Park No. 581" will be changed to "The Prairie Park" and "Park 581 Park Advisory Council" to "The Prairie Park Advisory Council", respectively.

Charles entered a Motion to make these changes. Motion was accepted by Dan Niersbach; seconded by Charmaine Sevier. All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

2) The second Motion proposed to amend PAC By-Laws (ARTICLE V – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY. Section 4: Meetings) to state the 3-day advance publication of agenda and prior month's meeting minutes applies to all PAC meetings, not just virtual meetings.

Charles entered a Motion to make these changes. Motion was accepted by JoAnn Altenbach; seconded by Rebecca Stevens. All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Bank Statement: Bank Statement and Treasurer's Report attached with detailed information. Milton Chandler also gave verbal report of Treasurer's report and PAC's bank monthly activities from March 1-31, 2024. March's beginning balance was \$2,035.20 & ending balance was \$2,365.20. The following deposits were made by check: 1) \$100; \$20. There were no debit/credit transactions or outstanding checks written. SwipeSimple donations were 1) \$200; 2) \$10. There were no SwipeSimple transaction or processing fees for the month of February.

After Milton Chandler's Treasurer report, Charles Williams entered a Motion to keep the SwipeSimple fee turned off. Motion was accepted by Lorraine Linnerud; seconded by Mary Dunneback. All in Favor, AYE. No one opposed.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Garden Committee: D. Chandler – Committee report attached. The Garden Committee met on 4/2/24 via Zoom. We discussed upcoming joint event with Parks Events Planning 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. In honor of Earth Day, please bring your own mug for coffee so we are not using disposable cups and helping the environment at the same time. Soil testing recommendations and costs were discussed for the community garden and for the new garden in The Prairie when application is approved after we get a water source installed. It is expensive so we will be careful by using a mask to minimize exposure of any lead, chemical toxins, etc. we may be exposed to if digging in the ground. We will not be planting any vegetables for the public this year. Cold stratification process and growing native plants from seeds are currently underway by Dorothy and Danielle. Permanent plant signage is in process by Danielle and her Mom using her Cricut machine to include both scientific plant names & common names. A QR code was generated for the iNaturalist site Danielle created, which has lots of pictures and information of plants currently in the community garden and serves as a place to record our observations. Names for community garden were discussed as an informal affectionate name to refer to it as the caretakers. We cannot give it a permanent name because it is not part of the park and is owned by CDOT. We will gather as a group in person to assess the community garden later in the month or early May. Next meeting will be on May 7th at 6:30 pm.
- Park Events Planning Committee: M. Dunneback – Committee report attached. The committee met on Zoom on 3/26/24 to finalize plans for the kite fly event on 4/6/24 (12-2pm) and briefly discussed the joint event with Garden Committee for Earth Day/Arbor Day on 4/20/24 (9am-12pm) with assistance from Openlands TreeKeepers. We enjoyed a beautiful kite fly event with approximately 35-40 people attending (20 adults signed participation waiver). Two kites were raffled off for free (congrats to Chaia & Bobby) and coffee, water, donuts, cookies and fruit snacks were provided. No event insurance was purchased so we saved money there, especially since price went up to \$200 per event. Expenses incurred totaled \$170.24, only \$84.13 receipt for Dunkin' Donuts was submitted for reimbursement, and the remaining balance was donated by Mary Dunneback and Ivette Williams. Money collected during event totaled \$280. A big thank you to the committee and PAC members who assisted in the park cleanups prior to the event and during the event. The event was well publicized, and we had a great turnout, which made for a very successful and fun kite flying day — the winds were in our favor.
- Park Investment Committee: L. Linnerud – Committee report attached. A press release, including a group photo with Rep. Slaughter and our PAC, was submitted to the Beverly Review and The Villager newspapers to announce the Build Illinois grant award for The Prairie Park. Attached is the press release that was published in the Beverly Review. We are currently waiting on a project manager to be assigned. Planned park improvements include a walking path, lighting and a water source, as stipulated in the grant. Once we find out who is assigned to our park, next steps include scheduling a Zoom meeting with the project manager, Board and Park Investment Committee.

VII. PAC BUSINESS

- FIFTH THIRD BANK Account Name Change: Charles Williams and Milton Chandler went to the bank in person to get name changed on PAC account from Park 581 Park Advisory Council to The Prairie Park Advisory Council.
- IRS PAC Name Change: Waiting on bank statement to reflect new park name in order to submit name change with IRS from “PARK 581 Park Advisory Council” to new name: “The Prairie Park Advisory Council”. EIN will remain the same.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- PAC T-Shirts: Marketing Committee to order PAC t-shirts with new park name and our logo. Getting cost estimates from various vendors. 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 and make a small profit for fundraising purposes.

IX. 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 4/24/24 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 (\$10,000) & MICROGRANT (\$2,500)**: AARP grant applications were submitted online on 2/2024. 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**)

X. UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4/20/2024: (9-12) Earth Day/Arbor Day joint event by Garden and Park Events Planning Committees with assistance from Openlands TreeKeepers. More volunteers are needed to assist hauling branches, park clean-up. Please RSVP at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdS68_ULa6ZTDiuoEa1I_-bCh6yOfS95IxmYVRXw_-Cn2eSyA/viewform?usp=pp_url
- TBD (April/May): Once Chicago Park District 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.

XI. PARK SUPERVISOR

- Parking Notice re Permit 170: Rebecca to send the parking notice by email to coaches to give to sports parents. Notices were emailed to PAC members and community, posted on our Facebook page, pet waste stations and little free library. In addition, notices were hand delivered to residents around The Prairie Park.

- Sports: Coach Mike Martin's flag football league to start on 4/28/24 (9 am). Soccer season begins around same date (11 am). Rebecca Medrano provided sports schedule. She will update with times for games. So far, there is only one day on 5/11/24 that all 4 fields (2 for soccer; 2 for flag football) will be used for sports games.
- Bicycle Rack: Rebecca communicated with Ray at Chicago Park District inquiring about work order status for bike rack installation at 118th & Oakley (across from St. Walter parking lot). Ray did not have a timeframe yet but will find out and get back to her.
- Park Name Signs: Rebecca has not received any news yet when the park signs will be installed at The Prairie Park.
- Other Updates: Kennedy Park Pool opens on 6/17/24. There are no other updates for now.

XII. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

None at this time.

XIII. 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	██████████@aol.com
Vice-President	Lorraine Linnerud	██████████@gmail.com
Secretary	Ivette Williams	██████████@aol.com
Treasurer	Milton Chandler	██████████@gmail.com

XIV. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM. Motion to adjourn was entered by Charles Williams, accepted by John Yañez; 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/1FAIpQLSdTDUkAOCbB2HzVphMBTuSWsYeSrq-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>