



Wheaton Park District

Wheaton Park District Board of Commissioners SUBCOMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday May 7, 2025

Community Center

1777 S. Blanchard Road, Wheaton, IL 60189

Graf Room #031

5:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER –

President Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., Commissioner Vires, Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner Pecharich, and Commissioner Mee were present.

Commissioner Frey and Commissioner Welker were absent.

Staff Present included: Executive Director Benard, Director of Parks and Planning Sperl, Director of Finance Simpson, Director of Recreation Beyer, Superintendent of Planning Hinchee, Assistant to the Director of Parks and Planning Doromal.

COMMUNITY INPUT

NONE

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Buildings and Grounds

1. **Community Center Interior Renovation Project Phase 3** – Review of proposed design concept, cost estimates and construction timeline

Scott Morlock of Williams Architects presented the conceptual design study for Phase 3 of the Community Center Interior Renovation Project, focusing on improvements to the first floor. The presentation included preliminary design ideas, estimated costs, and a proposed construction timeline. Board members participated in a discussion and Q&A following the presentation.

Commissioner Kelly noted the intent of the presentation was to review various project areas and gather preliminary budget figures for the next phase. Tom Poulos from Williams

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Architects emphasized that the purpose was to better understand the scope of work and seek board approval to continue with design development.

Andreas Symeonidis from Williams Architects reviewed proposed design changes, including a more welcoming main entrance, reconfigured gymnasium access to improve traffic flow, and alternate options for bringing in natural light. Director Benard explained the need for improved gym access, noting that patrons currently must walk across two courts to reach other spaces. Commissioner Kelly suggested bidding the gym access changes as an alternate, while Commissioner Pecharich noted that a cost-benefit analysis would help guide that decision.

Plans for preschool classrooms and the staff administration area include updated finishes and modernized restrooms. The teaching kitchen is proposed to be upgraded using existing infrastructure (including the main duct and hood system) and equipped with high-end residential-style appliances to support both teaching and catering functions. A concession window could also be added, creating a new opportunity for community and event use. Commissioner Pecharich inquired about utilization of space, and Andreas explained the design emphasizes educational functionality. Both Executive Director Benard and Director Beyer affirmed the redesign would enhance both current and future programming opportunities.

Breakout areas throughout the facility would receive updated finishes and reconfigured layouts to provide more comfortable waiting and gathering spaces. Examples include the hallway outside the Rathje Room and the facility's secondary entrance, where some walls may be removed to open the space.

Construction timing was discussed, particularly in relation to minimizing impact on summer camps and preschool programming. Benard noted temporary staff relocation would be needed during some phases. Tom confirmed that the construction schedule aims to avoid the school year, and that the current design is approximately 50% schematic.

Budget discussions followed. Commissioner Kelly asked what portion of the work is included in this year's budget. Benard confirmed that \$2 million is allocated across this year and next, though most construction costs would fall in 2026. He emphasized that out year capital budget approvals are estimates and not fixed commitments.

Commissioner Kelly recommended approving the full design scope, with the option to bid the project in two phases. The board generally agreed on finalizing the conceptual design and moving forward into more detailed design and planning.

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2. **Ray Morrill Community Center Entrance Facade Improvement Project** – Review of bid results

Commissioner Kelly noted that a standard color could be used for the metal panels for \$8,000 savings. The project scope may be further adjusted to include only a partial replacement of the siding for an additional potential reduction. Director Benard addressed a previous suggestion from Commissioner Pecharich regarding the installation of metal plating over the existing facade, explaining that this option was found to be unfeasible. Director Sperl stated our architect contacted several vendors to explore alternatives, and findings from those inquiries will be included in the next project packet for board review.

3. **Ray Morrill Community Center Memorial Room Sound System Improvement Project**
Review of bid results. Director Benard stated this was a separate bid item \$56,681.
No discussion

4. **Northside Pool Locker Room Flooring Improvement Project** – Review of quotes
Director Benard said three bids were received. Naperville painting is the lowest bid at \$24,140. No discussion.

5. **Purchase of 2025 Backhoe Loader** – Review of quotes
No discussion.

6. **Purchase 2025 Ford F-150** – Review of quotes
No discussion.

7. **Purchase 2025 Ford F350 Crew Cab Trucks (2)** – Review of quotes
No discussion.

8. **Blanchard Building Parking Lot Replacement Project** – Review change order #1
No discussion.

9. **Cosley Zoo Education Pavilion & Duck Enclosure Project** – Review change order #2 and 3.

Director Benard presented Change Orders #2 and #3 for the Cosley Zoo Education Pavilion and Duck Enclosure Project. To prevent damage to the existing parking lot pavers during construction, the contractor had recommended using construction mats for trucks to drive over that would have been costly. Commissioner Kelly proposed an alternative solution, delivering concrete in half loads, to minimize impact on the pavers. While this approach would incur additional hauling charges, it is more cost-effective.

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Benard also noted that the change orders include provisions for temporary ADA-compliant ramps and additional fencing. There was no further discussion from the board.

10. **Cosley Zoo Staff and Overflow Parking Area Project** – Review change order #3
No discussion.

11. **Reimbursement Agreement with Briarcliffe Baseball** – Review proposal for installation of batting cages.

Director Benard stated that Briarcliffe Baseball will fund the batting cage installation project, while the Wheaton Park District (WPD) will manage the bidding process. A reimbursement agreement with Briarcliffe Baseball will be requested to formalize the arrangement.

12. **Graf Park Atten Park and Central Athletic Complex Engineering Studies** – Review proposals

Director Benard discussed the need for engineering studies focused on drainage at the main ballfields, the feasibility of installing synthetic turf, and the potential replacement of existing synthetic turf at Graf Park. He also requested that the scope of work include a cost analysis for irrigation at Seven Gables.

13. **Toohey Park Improvements Design Services** – Review proposal from Upland Design

Director Benard noted that the shoreline, existing playground, and Safety City are strong candidates for an Oslad Grant. He emphasized the importance of having a design prepared for these areas prior to submitting the grant application. Park design assistance is being sought to support this effort. Benard also stated that the improvements would be necessary regardless of the grant outcome.

14. **Northside Park Girl Scout Cabin** – Review condition assessment and options

Director Benard reported that all activities and camps have been relocated due to the structure being deemed not suitable for public access per the recent engineering assessment. He presented three options for the board's consideration:

- a) Repair and restore the building
- b) Tear down and not replace
- c) Tear down and replace

Benard noted this would require future discussion on the historic structure's long-term planned use and budgeting for 2026.

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Commissioner Kelly also suggested fencing off the area and posting signage to prevent public access. Additionally, he requested the topic be added to the agenda for the next Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting.

15. Illinois Parks and Recreation Association Statewide Funding Initiative – Review of application

All in approval of moving forward.

Finance and Administration

1. Community Wide Attitude and Interest Survey – Review of Survey Draft

Jeff Andreasen and Dannie Wilson presented the draft version of the Community Wide Attitude and Interest Survey. The board engaged in a Q&A session following the presentation. Barry Dunn is currently leading the overall strategic planning process.

Commissioner Pecharich inquired about the number of responses appropriate for a district of this size. Dannie Wilson responded that while every community is unique, response rates will be interpreted accordingly.

Commissioner Kelly expressed concern that the current survey platform may be attracting responses from organized interest groups rather than typical families. Dannie assured the board that the data can be filtered to identify such patterns and clarified that the survey is not entirely self-selecting.

Jeff Andreasen outlined that the survey methodology includes random sampling through online pop-ups, outreach efforts, and multiple response options: online, phone, or paper. At least 400 completed surveys are targeted, and randomly selected households will receive unique participation links. Commissioner Barrett asked how long it would take to collect the responses. Jeff estimated approximately five weeks, with staff support in community outreach. He also confirmed that baseline demographic data will be sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau. In response to a question from Commissioner Pecharich about the number of invitations needed, Jeff explained that thousands would need to be distributed. Director Benard noted that in 2016 we had a return rate of 14% for paper survey and that was considered strong.

There was further discussion around possibly opening a general public version of the survey. Jeff mentioned it could follow the random-sample phase. However, concerns were raised by the board regarding potential inconsistencies between random and public responses. The board reached consensus not to proceed with a public version. Dannie advised managing staff expectations for insights from any broader public survey, while Benard emphasized the importance of obtaining defensible data and supported the

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continued use of the Social Pinpoint platform. He concluded by seeking confirmation for a finalized draft.

Question Review and Revisions:

- Commissioner Kelly requested rephrasing Question #6 for clarity, suggesting a more direct inquiry into whether WPD is meeting community needs.
- Commissioner Pecharich suggested revising Question #18 to address ADA improvements at Rice Pool. Jeff proposed updating the language to "improve." Commissioner Kelly added further suggestions, including options to "modernize" the pool or fully "replace" it, depending on intended longevity (10–15 vs. 30 years).
- Director Benard commented on Question #16, ensuring that the listed options reflect what the board wants to evaluate. Commissioner Kelly noted that a referendum would be needed regardless of the option selected, but Benard cautioned against delving into that level of detail at this stage.
- Commissioner Welker, who could not attend, submitted the following suggestions:
 - (A) Include a question about installing lights with low light pollution at Seven Gables and Briarpatch.
 - (B) For Question #21, offer more space for open-ended responses. Jeff noted that older residents (70+) receiving paper surveys could include extra pages.
 - (C) Regarding Question #24, although some concerns were raised about age divisions in sports and athletics, the board decided to keep the current format.

Commissioner Pecharich asked about the threshold for survey completion if a respondent only answers a portion. Jeff stated that the majority of the survey would need to be completed. Demographic questions are not essential for the survey to be considered valid since some people will not complete.

Lastly, Commissioner Barrett asked if the estimated 8.5% of the total property tax bill applies district-wide. Benard responded that it does.

2. **Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Development** – Review of the 2026 Budget Development Calendar for the Wheaton Park District
No further discussion.

3. **Annual Review of Finance Policies** – Review of Finance Policies and Proposed Amendments
No further discussion.

16 Discussion: Lighting Replacement on the West Side of Cosley Zoo

Commissioner Kelly raised a question regarding the lighting on the west side of Cosley Zoo, noting recent updates to the shading and inquiring whether the board should consider replacing the existing light poles to align with dark sky compliance standards. The estimated cost for this potential change is approximately \$95,000.

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Commissioner Kelly asked whether this should be handled as a formal change order or if the project should be sent out for bid. He also questioned whether replacing the parking lot lighting was previously anticipated. Director Benard responded that while the lights had been refurbished in the past, full replacement had not been flagged as a priority item.

Benard suggested that the cost could potentially be covered through the Cosley Foundation. He added that if the Zoo expresses interest in pursuing the lighting replacement, the board could either approve the expense or opt to bid it out at a later date. Commissioner Pecharich agreed, stating that unless the upgrade is a regulatory requirement, the district should refrain from funding it directly. She recommended consulting the Zoo Foundation to get their opinion on whether they would like to take on the project.

Benard concluded by reiterating that the district will eventually comprehensively address dark sky compliance as part of its broader initiatives.

CLOSED SESSION

- a. Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)
- b. The Selection of a Person to Fill a Vacancy in Public Office, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3).
- c. Purchase or Lease of Real Property, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(5)
- d. Setting of Price for Sale or Lease of Property Owned by the Public Body, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(6)
- e. Pending, Probable or Imminent Litigation, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(11)
- f. Discussion of Minutes of Meetings Lawfully Closed Under this Act, Whether for Purposes of Approval by the Body of the Minutes or Semi-Annual Review of the Minutes, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:00p.m. Commissioner Pecharich moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Kelly, Motion carried by voice vote.



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