

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

November 8, 2022

WSSRA Offices

2915 Maple Street, Franklin Park II, 60304

**MINUTES**

- I. Chairman Jackie Iovinelli called the **meeting to order** at 4:01pm those present included:

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District  
Sandy Lentz, Jan Arnold Park District of Oak Park  
Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park  
Liz Visteen, Park District of Franklin Park  
Ted Gruber, Elmwood Park  
Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

AnneMarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District  
Anna Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights  
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside  
Nicole Collier, Village of North Riverside  
Deborah Gayon, Berwyn Park District

**Not in Attendance:**

North Berwyn Park EA

**Others in Attendance:**

WSSRA staff: Nicole Walsh, Marianne Birko, Beth Kaplan, WSSRF remote

- II. **Approval of Agenda Gruber/Malchiodi to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.**
- III. **Approval of the Consent Agenda Sletten/Lentz motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the October 11, 2022, Minutes, Financial Report & Disbursements. Roll call vote showed 11 yes votes, and the motion was approved**
- IV. **No Public Comment**
- V. **Under the Foundation Kaplan reported on behalf of the Foundation Board, The WSSRF is currently focusing on two upcoming events: WSSRF is happy to report the "Fall in for Our Stars" Casino Night that took place at the Cheney Mansion on Friday October 14, 2022 was a great success! It was a wonderful evening filled with Casino Gaming fun, cocktails, great food in a wonderful setting thanks to the Park District of Oak Park. Everyone who was able to join us left talking about next year! We are grateful to all of you who were able to support us by contributing to the Great Raffle prizes, Star Pull and Nine Amazing Live Auction items. This event raised 31,600 in revenue for a net profit of \$23,500. Third highest ever for this event! Event 1 WSSRF's Holiday Solicitation will go out in early December along with Giving Tuesday, on November 29, 2022. Event 2 The WSSRF will close out the year with two Holiday Concerts held on Friday, December 9 & 16 at the Thatcher Woods Pavilion. Tickets will be sold through WSSRA and PACTT so Save the Date and watch more information that will be out soon! As always, the Foundation Board of Directors thanks all of you for your continued support.**
- VII. **Under Committee Reports**
- A. **Finance Committee** Arnold reported the Finance Committee met on November 1 to further discuss any 2023 budget questions, the Leyden Township question, and the Broadview Park District request for information. Details will be shared later in the agenda.
- B. **Nominating Committee** Sletten reported he will be heading up the Nominating Committee for the 2023 WSSRA Board of Directors Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The slate will be shared at the December 2023 meeting and approved at the Annual Meeting in January 2023.
- VIII. **Unfinished Business**
- A. **Approval of the Recommended 2023 Proposed Budget**  
Birko presented the 2023 budget as reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee. There was no further discussion. **Lentz/Gruber motioned by roll call vote the WSSRA Board of Directors Approves the recommended 2023. Roll call vote showed Gayon, Gruber, Iovinelli, Visteen, Wegrecki, Flaherty, Lentz, Sletten, Collier, Malchiodi, Stanczyk, 11 yes votes, and the motion was approved.**

B. **Park District of Forest Park Building & Land purchase Update** Iovinelli updated the WSSRA Board of Directors on the Park District of Forest Park's has secured the perimeter of the property and will begin demolition by the end of this week. ComEd and Nicor have completed their work and once the building is down, they will create temporary green space. Starting 2023 the planning begins for a 20,000 sq feet building.

C. No other

IX. **Under New Business:**

A. **Alternate payment request from the Veterans Park District** Due to the late distribution of Cook County Tax bills the Veterans Park District is respectfully requesting their first quarter WSSRA share payment be split in two payments to be paid on January 15, 2023, and the second half to be paid on February 15, 2023.

**Wegrecki/Malchiodi motioned the WSSRA Board of Directors by roll call vote approve the requested Alternate payment as requested by the Veterans Park District. Roll call vote showed Gayon, Gruber, Iovinelli, Visteen, Wegrecki, Flaherty, Lentz, Sletten, Collier, Malchiodi, Stanczyk, 11 yes votes, and the motion was approved.**

B. **Broadview Park District Presentation** Birko reported the Broadview Park District has requested information on a partnership with WSSRA. She previously met with Brian Dawson the Executive Director in February 2022 along with the Memorial Park District Director. Birko stated she last did a presentation to the Broadview Park District in 2011 under the direction of Katrina Thompson who is now the town's mayor but they did not join. The Broadview Park District joined the Maywood Park District in creating New Star North Special Services in 2019/2020 and Brian shared they are unhappy with the lack of services. Birko will be presenting to their board on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Birko reminded the board of the process when considering a new partner and shared the potential timeline. Arnold reminded the board of the current WSSRA wait list and staffing issues that need to be considered in any future decisions.

C. **Leyden Township Request** Birko reported Supervisor Rocco Biscaglio asked what it would take for the Westdale Park District, a member of Leyden Township to join WSSRA. Birko shared Leyden is currently collecting the tax for the Westdale Park District since they went bankrupt in 2000. She shared that Westdale Park District joined WSSRA in 1982 and left in 2000 and shortly after the Westdale Park District went bankrupt. She reported the WSSRA Finance Committee reviewed the information and believes since Westdale Park District is under the umbrella of the Leyden Township it creates too many obstacles with districts who are not currently a part of WSSRA and do not recommend moving forward with any further discussions. The board agreed with this conclusion.

D. **Resolution #2022-06 Acknowledgement of Sandy Fejt's Retirement** The WSSRA Board acknowledged and thanked Sandy Fejt for her 2 years as the WSSRA Board Representative for the Berwyn Park District. With her support we have continued a strong relationship with the Berwyn Park District. **Wegrecki/Gayon motioned to approve Resolution #2022-06 acknowledging the contributions of Sandy Fejt as the Board of Representative for the Berwyn Park District. The motion was unanimously approved.**

E. No other

X. **Under Correspondence No Comments**

XI. **Under Board Reports: Sletten reported the River Forest Park District's** Keystone project continues which includes tennis courts, basketball & batting cages with a June 1 opening. They have begun plans for updating the Washington Commons playground and have included WSSRA in the planning process. They are also working on their Master Plan that they will begin implementing in March. Sletten also reported the district will be levying at 5%. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District is finalizing their Winter/Spring program guide. They will be hosting a ceremony honoring the local Veterans. Their holiday plans include Breakfast with Santa and a Winter Wonderland.** Greg also mentioned they were honored to host the WSSRA's WGN filming of "Around Town" this past week. **Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District's** had a great start to Fall and had a very successful New Halloween event with over 500 attendees. They are currently working on small park improvements and have almost filled all the positions at their pre-school but they will need more staff to begin taking persons off of the wait list. They are currently hiring for a Part-time Marketing Coordinator and are also taking applications for the Finance

Manager position who is retiring in January. Everything is moving along with the pool replacement project.

**Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights** will be hosting "A Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street" in celebration of the Villages 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. They will also be hosting "Singing with the Clerk" holiday event! **Gayon reported the Berwyn Park District** recently hosted the Flag Walk on November 11<sup>th</sup> and will be hosting the Tree lighting on December 4<sup>th</sup>. They recently partnered with the Township Recreation Department and NBPD with a "Dia De Los Muertos Community Ofrenda; Day of the Dead" celebration that due to the high winds thankfully moved in-doors. They will be hosting a variety of Holiday events that will be scaled back due to the current staffing shortage. The board named Cindy Hayes, Superintendent of Finance as the interim Executive Director, the Executive Director position is posted with the hope to hire by late February - March. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park** hosted over 400 guests at their Annual Halloween party on Halloween including pumpkin decorating and a variety of games. Plans are in the works to change it up for next year. They are currently taking registration for their Youth Basketball league which starts in January. Their numbers are low so they may shift to a skills training program. They are also busy planning for the Holiday Stroll taking place on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Gruber reported for all Pickleball lovers they are currently striping for Pickleball on their indoor gym courts. **Collier reported the Village of North Riverside** had a busy October and just completed a week of Halloween events and programs. They are winding down their Fall Basketball with 150 participants registered and registration has just opened for the Winter session of Basketball. Their Winter/Spring brochure is being finalized and they will be hosting Winter Wonder Fest on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The Village is excited to welcome the newly hired Recreation Director who will start on November 17, 2022. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park's** new CRC is 65% complete. They are temping windows due to a delay in framing materials. They are still on schedule for the Grand Opening in late spring! Included in the CRC they are red lining for 6 Indoor Pickleball Courts. Oak Park is currently reviewing the Maple Park Master Plan and just completed a busy Fall with many programs and Halloween events. This included the return of the in-person Frank Lloyd Wright Races while down by 12% there were more walkers than runners this year. They are hoping to approve the 2023 budget next week and are levying at 5%. They just completed a collaborative agreement with OPRFHS to share field space which requires an amendment with the Village for extending the light use on the field. The plan will be implemented in Fall 2023. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside** hosted a variety of Fall events including their drive through Haunted House of which WSSRA was a part of. The Fall soccer and softball season has ended and they just hosted a Pickleball Tournament last Sunday and are busy preparing for their Holiday festivities including the Holiday Stroll on December 2. Basketball registration has started and they are once again planning for an outdoor ice rink. **Visteen reported the Park District of Franklin Park** hosted their Annual Fall events including the Fall Fest Parade and Trick or Treat in the park hosting over 700 participants. They are currently preparing for their December events including Breakfast with Santa, 2 Polar Express train rides, some pop up events including a Line dancing and Lemonade and Holiday decorating. They are collaborating with Leyden Township, Norridge Park District and Rosemont in a Volleyball league. Their basketball league starts in January. **Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park** "Where every day is a Walk in the Park." Their Fall Fest had a great turn-out and they plan to grow it even bigger next year. Iovinelli proudly shared the Park District team won the Casket races and encouraged others to join in the fun next year. They also hosted the Trunk or Treat events which always has a great turn out and will be hosting a variety of Holiday events coming up. Iovinelli reported the PDOFP will be going to bid on the Pocket Park's and are hoping for funding from an OSLAD grant for another. She reported the Splash Pad is not done and they will be ending their work for this year on December 1<sup>st</sup>. As a result, they will not be testing the water this year. They are also updating their camera system to include all aspects of the park as it is tied to the Police department which is helpful in avoiding any vandalism in the park.

**XII. Executive Director's Report- Birko Reported**

- A. **WSSRF "Fallin for Our Stars" Fundraising Success** Thanks to all who participated by donating, buying tickets, and attending the WSSRF's Fallin for Our Stars event on Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. The night was bound to be a success set in the lovely Cheney Mansion in Oak Park courtesy of the Park District of Oak Park. It was a great evening with great food, fun and fundraising! It raised over 23,000 in profits with more sponsorships still coming in.
- B. **Executive Directors Annual Review** Board Chairperson Iovinelli will be sending out the Executive Director Birko's Annual Review. Please complete and return to Iovinelli by December 1, 2022, so a summary can be prepared for the December 13, 2022, Board meeting.



- C. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko reminded the board she is still scheduling Annual presentations to meet with your boards and share the Annual report and WSSRA updates. Call or email Birko with dates and times that work for you.
- D. **Staff Report: Birko reported for April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation**
1. **Program Updates** Fall programs are wrapping up on November 12. Program highlights include WSSRA's new collaborative program, *Beyond the Bell*, with Berwyn North School District 98 is going well, we have 8 students registered. Saturday Social Clubs have been very popular, the groups enjoyed a Bonfire at the Riverside Cabin, *Dave and Busters*, a Halloween dance and will end the season volunteering at *Feed My Starving Children*. Our school-aged participants will enjoy a visit to the Shedd Aquarium on November 23.
  2. **Winter/Spring Brochure** Staff are busy planning for winter/spring brochure copy which is set to go to print the week of November 21.
  3. **Special Olympics**
    - i. **Floor Hockey** WSSRA had 10 athletes compete in the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Skill Competition on October 12, 8 athletes received a gold medal and will be advancing to the state competition at Northeastern University on November 19.
    - ii. **Bowling** WSSRA had 2 athletes advance to the Special Olympics Sectional Bowling Tournament on October 16, participants took third and fourth place.
  4. **Inclusion** WSSRA is currently supporting 34 participants in 38 inclusive programs and aftercare programs. Staffing continues to be a challenge, any requests coming in will take a minimum of two weeks to secure staffing.
  5. **Special Events**
    - i. **Partner Events** WSSRA had a wonderful time participating in partner Halloween events, staff attended Riverside's Drive-Thru Haunted House on October 15 and Oak Park's Trunk or Treat on October 28.
    - ii. **Boo Bash** WSSRA collaborated with the Park District of Oak Park to offer a new sensory-sensitive special event this year on October 30 at the Cheney Mansion, the event was sold out with 40 participants and family members in attendance.
    - iii. **Turkey Bingo** WSSRA is attending North Riverside's Turkey Bingo event on November 18. Participants will have the opportunity to win a turkey, ham, pie and more.
    - iv. **Polar Express** The Polar Express Story Time is back this year. On December 10, families will enjoy a fun-filled train ride to the "North Pole" with a visit from Santa himself! The event is sponsored by Thumbuddy Special.
- E. **Staff Report: Birko reported for Annie Hart**
1. **Office** Our part time Front Office Assistant is out for the next 3 months after welcoming a baby girl. We have hired a short-term replacement while Jenna is gone, and she is scheduled to start next week and work Tuesdays and Thursdays only. WSSRA has started the process of changing over payrolls from PayCom to Paylocity. Our Staff Manager, Finance Manager and I had our kickoff call earlier this week.
  2. **Safety** WSSRA completed its Fleet Form with PDRMA and is still awaiting feedback on where we can continue to grow as a safe agency.
  3. **WSSRA Marketing** Walsh shared a friendly reminder, please connect with your staff, and make sure they have what they need from her. She reported she will be working with your PR staff to update the WSSRA information as our recruitment success is dependent on your assistance in getting the word out.
  4. **No Other**

**XII. Closed Session None**

**XIII. Possible Action following closed session None**

**XIV. Adjournment** Malchiodi/Sletten moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:11pm. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director