

West Suburban Special Recreation Association

October 1, 2024

WSSRA

2915 Maple Street, Franklin Park, IL 60131

DRAFT MINUTES

I. Chairperson Ron Malchiodi called the meeting to order at 4:02pm those present included:

Jan Arnold Park District of Oak Park arrived 4:05

Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park

Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside

Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District, left 5:05

Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District remote, left 4:23

Kelly Diaz, North Berwyn Park District

Nate Brown, Norridge Park District arrived 4:05

Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park

Joe Zerillo, Village of Harwood Heights

Not in Attendance: EA Village of North Riverside

Others in Attendance: WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko, WSSRF Christine Nakatsuka

- I. Approval of Remote Attendees meeting Qualifying Event: LoCascio/Gruber motioned to approve Fallon's remote attendance for Berwyn Park District. A roll call vote resulted in unanimous approval. Iovinelli/Arnold motioned to approve Nate Brown as the Board Representative for the Norridge Park District. The motion was unanimously approved**
- II. Approval of Agenda Gruber/Iovinelli motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimous approved**
- III. Approval of the Consent Agenda Iovinelli/Gruber motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the September 12, 2024, Minutes, the September Financial report and Pre-paid Disbursements for September 2024. Roll call vote showed 11 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

IV. No Public Comment

- V. Under the Foundation Christine Nakatsuka reported on behalf of the Foundation. The Foundation is finalizing their planning for the Fallin For Our Stars Casino night event that is scheduled for Friday, November 8, 2024 taking place at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park. We are soliciting donations for the raffle prizes and \$25 and up gift cards for the Star Pull. Anyone wanting to donate items reach out to Marianne Birko at WSSRA, marianneb@wssra.net. Included in your packet is the sponsorship information. Please consider supporting the Foundation by donating or consider a sponsorship and plan to join us for the event! It is guaranteed to be a FUN night! Please do your part to help promote this event by taking a banner or two to hang, take fliers and post on your websites.**

Holiday Solicitation The Foundation is also making final plans to their Holiday Solicitation campaign taking place online and through the US mail during the month of December. The final version of the Holiday Solicitation will be shared next month.

WSSRA hiring assistance The Foundation is committed to support WSSRA in their search for staff for Fall programs and Special Events. Staff have been invited to present to various parent groups to help get the word out about WSSRA programs and staff support. WSSRF once again a special thanks to all of you for your continued support throughout the year!

VI. Under Committee Reports

- A. Finance Committee Chairperson Sletten shared the committee met headed by Arnold met September 25 to review discussions of the interest expressed by the Village of River Grove, WSSRA proposed 2025 shares and 2025 budget planning. More details to be shared.**

B. No Other

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Approval of the Village of River Grove joining the WSSRA Consortium**

Birko shared WSSRA has been in discussions with the Village of River Grove most recently since July 2020. For your information we have met with VRG staff many times and Mayor Guerin has seized the moment to work with this board to educate them on our potential partnership. They understand the formula at the bottom of the shares sheet which takes out the overlapping properties of River Grove residents west of the Des Plaines river that are a part of the Veterans Park District. Staff have prepared a summary and evaluation of the Village of River Grove as a future partner. As discussed in earlier meetings, WSSRA feels that the VRG is geographically desirable, and we feel we can serve the residents of VRG who have disabilities successfully with no recommended changes to the current WSSRA staffing structure. The WSSRA Finance Committee has reviewed these reports and recommends

accepting the Village of River Grove as a new partner to the Association with a start date of January 1, 2025.

Zerillo/lovinelli motioned to approve the Agreement for Membership of the Village of River Grove in West Suburban Special Recreation Association starting January 1, 2025. The agreement will include the exclusion of River Grove properties that are a part of the Veterans Park District. A roll call vote at the October 1, 2024 WSSRA Board of Directors meeting with 11 voting yes: Fallon, Gruber, lovinelli, LoCascio, Zerillo, Brown, Diaz, Arnold, Sletten, Malchiodi, Stanczyk and the motion was approved unanimously!

Arnold/Gruber motioned to approve Resolution 2024-01 Approving Membership of the Village of River Grove in the West Suburban Special Recreation Association starting January 1, 2025. A roll call vote at the October 1, 2024 WSSRA Board of Directors meeting with 11 voting yes: Fallon, Gruber, lovinelli, LoCascio, Zerillo, Brown, Diaz, Arnold, Sletten, Malchiodi, Stanczyk and the motion was approved unanimously!

B. Approval of the 2025 WSSRA Partner Shares

The WSSRA Finance committee reviewed and recommends the 2025 Partner Shares with a 4% rate increase over the 2024 shares to meet the demand for increased costs in providing WSSRA services.

Arnold/lovinelli motioned the Board of Directors vote to approve the recommended 2025 shares which includes a 4% share increase and includes the Village of River Grove. A roll call vote resulted in 10 yes votes and unanimous approval. (Fallon had to leave the meeting at 4:23 for a BPD committee mtg)

- C. Park District of Forest Park Building Updates** lovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park has received the preliminary plans and estimated pricing from Perkins & Will for a 40,000 SF building and the park board continues to support plans to move forward. The next steps are to create a funding plan as construction costs have gone up 30%.

D. No Other

VIII. Under New Business

A. Presentation of the 2025 Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative Review

Birko presented the 2025 budget as reviewed highlights as recommended by the Finance Committee. The board was asked to come prepared to approve at the November 12, 2024 board meeting. Arnold shared she looked into updates from PDRMA's legal counsel for FLSA and they believe there will be another appeal, and we should consider waiting until January prior to making any final decisions. Arnold also shared she was looking at birth trends and life expectancies and feels WSSRA needs to continue to plan forward for the Adult population and day programming opportunities. Malchiodi shared updates on WSSRA's current Adult Day program Community Cruisers and how we have increased the number of days offered and the hours to 2 – 3 days per week every season year-round. Noting our biggest challenge is dedicated facility space from a partner. Arnold offered to have WSSRA consider Anderson Recreation Center during the day only.

B. No Other

IX. Under Correspondence No Comments

X. Under Board Reports

Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District had their Autumn Fest this past weekend and gave away 450 tote bags, 1 per household. All in all they had 1000 attendees and a successful day. They brought back vendors and WSSRA was in attendance as well. Coming up is the Haunt on Hirsch Street Family Block Party on Friday, October 18 from 6-8pm at Bulger Park. The event will feature inflatables, haunted train ride and animatronics throughout the park! They are also busy planning programming for Winter and Spring session as well. **Sletten reported for the River Forest Park District's** "Color Run" was once again a success with numbers and sponsors up and as a result are able to donate \$1,300 to WSSRA. They will be hosting their Halloween event at Keystone next Friday, October 11. Their Master vision plan continues, and the board is hoping to publish sometime in November. They also have a few positions open – due to some Recreation Department reorganization. They are currently hiring an Athletic Manager and Administrative Assistant. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin** Park's Annual Fall Fest Parade is this Sunday, October 6 with the pumpkin fest afterwards. There will be "Trick or Treating" in the park at end of month. The Rooftop beehives at North Park continue and park district staff are taking it on the road with a portable hive taken to local school groups for observation and continuing

education on bee life! **Brown reported the Norridge Park District's** Pumpkin Fest is Saturday, Oct. 19th 11a – 3p and will include hayrides and kid's activities. Perfect timing for the last day of soccer... Then it is all things Christmas as the park transforms with lots of new characters including the Villian's of Christmas and characters from it's a Wonderful Life... They are working on developing their marketing department and more community partnerships. Brown stated Norridge is all in supporting WSSRA in whatever way they can. Including all aspects of Inclusion as well. He witnessed the benefits of Inclusion for the Lopez family with their daughter involved in the NPD soccer program. Her success is the Districts success! They are also busy developing the Winter Spring catalogue. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park Oak** has a lot of Halloween Events coming up, they are hosting the Annual Frank Lloyd Wright races on Sunday, October 20 and they are still looking for any early morning risers to volunteer! The Design competition for Anderson Center is complete and the winners have been announced. They recently conducted the Carroll Center community meeting, and the most popular request was people wanting bocce. Staff are wrapping up budget presentation to board, the Rehm project is underway and Seven staff and 4 board members are attending NRPA for the Gold Medal Finalist presentation and fingers crossed this one for the WIN! Lastly the PDOP did a reorganization of agency to streamline operations and give staff more development opportunities. And there are two board member seats up for election. One person is running for reelection. **Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park** "Where every day is a walk in the Park!" The softball field project is complete, and the park is green again! The OSLAD project at Remembrance Park is nearly complete and they will have a soft opening of the playground sometime this fall. They will be starting the hardwood floor project in the main building. Watch for the WGN viewing of the "90 Nightmares" coffin races to be held on October 19 in celebration of the Park Districts 90th Anniversary. Iovinelli and Murphy look forward to attending NRPA next week and supporting the PDOP for their bid of the Gold Medal award! They have two board seats open. **Zerillo reported the Village of Harwood Heights** wrapped up the Village Fest in August and had a very successful Annual Car Show on September 15 with over 200 cars participating! VHH also hosted the first ever battle of the Badge, a softball game between the Police and Fire departments. The Fire department won both games. All are welcome to join the Annual Craft Fair this weekend on October 4th followed by their Annual Halloween Party event on October 26th from 1 - 3:00pm. Everyone is welcome. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park** had a their last Back to School BBQ to celebrate the end of summer and head into Fall on September 12 and there were over 1000 persons present. Fall session Volleyball and Bocce have begun. Indoor Golf season will follow. They will celebrate their Halloween Party on October 31st at the Community Center. **Diaz reported the North Berwyn Park District's** The JCV center will be ADA compliant by the end of October. They too will have a lot of Halloween events this month. They are currently restructuring the sports programs and offering travel teams with soccer to start. The park district has 2 board members up for reelection. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside's** Master Plan work is at the halfway point in the Master Planning process. They have conducted the community survey, and the results were presented to the board. Included in the process is park improvement benchmarks. This has been a good exercise and educational about where improvements can be made. Now they can strategize how to move forward. They had their last concert in the park last Friday and they will be hosting their Halloween Trunk or Treat Oct. 10 and will be hosting their Haunted House for the first time at the Cabin. They too are looking for volunteers. They will close the Fall session with the Decades Dance in conjunction with the Coat Drive!

XI. **Executive Director's Report** *Birko Reported*

- A. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko is 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 in 2024.
- B. **Attend the WSSRF "Fallin For Our Stars Event"** Birko invites all to support the WSSRF FFOS Casino night on Friday, November 8th from 7:00 until 11:00pm at the PDOP's Cheney Mansion. Guests will enjoy an evening of Casino gaming, food, drink, raffle, and outstanding LIVE Auction items to bid on. Not able to come then consider a donation or sponsorship. Participation by each of the WSSRA Partners is critical to this event's success. For more information go the www.wssra.net
- C. **River Forest Park District "Color Run" Success** WSSRA worked collaboratively with the River Forest Park District on their second year of the "Color Run" event. This wonderful community event engages families in a local, safe 1 mile run with the added bonus of environmentally safe color tossed a s a motivator along the run route. All of us at WSSRA look forward to participating staffing the color stations and the start/finish line on race day. Once again, this year's event surpassed last year's event with 150 runners who had a blast with the whole family involved! A BIG thank you to Mike Sletten and Karen Stille and the RFPD staff for hosting this event and their continued support with all of the proceeds being donated to WSSRA!
- D. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**

1. **Programs** Fall programs are going well. We are excited to introduce several new offerings, including two youth cooking classes, cheerleading, mini movers, and a junior basketball team. Additionally, we started a new after-school program called SPARK in collaboration Ridgewood, West Leyden, Morton West, and OPRF High School. Students will participate in monthly activities to enhance social interaction and develop life skills.
2. **Special Olympics**
 - Golf** Four athletes competed in the Special Olympics State Golf Competition on September 6-7 in Decatur, three athletes came in second place and one athlete came in fourth place.
 - Bocce** WSSRA had nine athletes competed in the Special Olympics Regional Bocce Tournament on September 14 at Grant Park in Northlake. Four athletes received gold medals and will advance to the state summer games in June 2025.
 - Volleyball** Our two volleyball teams competed in the Special Olympics Regional Tournament on September 22 at York High School in Elmhurst, with both teams finishing in second place within their divisions. The season is concluding with the TR Tournament on September 28.
 - Floor Hockey** WSSRA started a new floor hockey team, games begin on Monday, September 30.
 - Special Olympics Bowling** We have six athletes set to compete in the Special Olympics Sectional Bowling Tournament on October 13 at Stardust Bowl in Addison. Gold medal winners will advance to state bowling in December.
3. **Hiring Updates** WSSRA is currently conducting interviews for our vacant Program Manager position. Our program staffing is going well, we just onboarded and trained five staff members and two volunteers to work fall programs. We are continuing our partnership with Dominican University's Office of Civic Learning, which allows us to provide volunteer opportunities for their nursing students, we have four students volunteering with us this season. Additionally, one psychology student from Dominican University is completing her internship with us. We are hiring a few additional Inclusion Aides to assist with our fall inclusion requests. Interested candidates can apply on our website at wssra.net
4. **Inclusion** Our inclusion team has been busy conducting participant assessment and observations. We are currently supporting 40 participants in 66 inclusive programs. For any questions about inclusion, please reach out to Chris Sturm at chriss@wssra.net.
5. **Special Events**
 - **North Riverside Chili Cook-Off** WSSRA participated in North Riverside's Chili Cook Off on September 20, featuring chili prepared by our Now We're Cooking participants.
 - **Upcoming Events** WSSRA is attending several upcoming partner and community events, including Veteran's Park District Autumn Fest at Gouin Park on September 28, North Riverside's Monarch Festival at Commons Park on September 28, Franklin Park's Fall Fest Parade on October 6, Riverside's Trunk or Treat on October 10, and Oak Park's Trunk or Treat on October 25. A special thanks to all for the opportunity to include WSSRA!

E. Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Business reported

1. **Transportation** Our Transportation Specialist, Jacob Kell, continues to gather information for our foundation for the purchase of an additional minivan. Jacob, along with other WSSRA staff has been working diligently to get all the buses serviced and several safety recalls taken care of before we started our Fall program season.
2. **Staff Manager Update** Joseph Juhasz started with WSSRA on September 26th. Joseph has a degree in Organizational Leadership with a minor in Computer Information Technology. Joseph has 7 years working as an HR Generalist and comes to us with a lot of experience using Paylocity, which has already shown himself to be very helpful.
3. **Safety** Due to staff turnover, WSSRA is updating its Safety Team. We have asked our Transportation Specialist, Jacob Kell, to step into the PDRMA Safety Team Leader role. Jacob will take over the team in the next few weeks once we have hired our new Program Manager.
4. **Other**

XII. **Closed Session** None

XIII. **Adjournment** **Arnold/Iovinelli motioned** to adjourn the meeting at 5:25pm. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Birko

Marianne Birko, Executive Director, mb/ Oct.1, 2024 minutes