

Welles Park Advisory Council
March 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Call to Meeting at 7:00 pm by Aaron Durnbaugh

(Meeting conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions)

Roll Call Aaron Durnbaugh (WPAC President), Bethany Simmons (WPAC Vice President), Adrienne Roe (WPAC Secretary), Becky Kliber (Welles Supervisor), Sherry Skalko, Coral Negrón, Sue Smock-Lawson, Bill Bergfalk, Scott Michaels, Michael Sewell (47th Ward Office), Gene Schulter, Peter Buol

Treasurer Report – Aaron

Aaron shared the main points of Sarah's treasury report as was emailed to the executive board.

- The current balance is \$55,975.22
- Sarah is still trying to figure out how much remains to be received from Joe Krysztpik's restitution. There is so far no new information from the Cook County Adult Program Department.

Gene asked to know more, specifically how much we will get back. Aaron responded that Sarah is working on figuring that out.

Park Report – Becky

Becky offered several park updates:

1. Family Valentine Hunt was successful despite the weather. Thank you, especially Bethany for helping in the freezing weather. 72 registered, approx 40 participated.
2. Staff vaccinations in process (not mandatory) Park District staff are now considered 1B.
3. Spring programs opening a few more offerings, groups of 15. Staff is limited to regular contact with 50 people max per week, therefore less programs can be offered. Registration March 8 & 9.
4. Summer, don't know yet about camp, but assume more kids than last summer will be allowed.
5. Playground is open again.
6. Pool & Fitness Centers: goal is to open by spring session for limited usage. Pool: lap swim and Team Sports only. A reservation system will be in place in one-hour increments. The number of participants limited by the facility size.

Requests

No longer need the requested \$144.00 for BINGO program.

Election of Officers

Sherry motions to approve the previous slate of officers; Aaron-President, Bethany-VP, Sarah-Treasurer, Adrienne-Secretary. Bethany seconds, approved.

Old Business

WPPA Lights Proposal

- We have not taken a position in support or not in support for the lights proposed for the baseball fields. We are waiting to see what the community thinks and what are their concerns.
- After we get the sense of the community's opinions, we will have a meeting to discuss this topic and vote on our position.
- Our position last year after WPPA representatives gave us a presentation, was to see the WPPA get more community feedback.
- Sherry reminded us about their waiting lists and lights allowing them to add more players.
- Becky pointed out that the WPPA has been very transparent with her. Her stance is also based on the community and she has asked for there to be three meetings. Becky wants to know what people in the 2-3 blocks of the park think of the proposal. She has talked to the alderman about them being a neutral meeting leader or do a survey. She will hopefully find out more soon.
- Michael Sewall (47th Ward office) mentioned that he could talk to the alderman again and mention the idea of a survey. The Alderman wants the community to give feedback as well.
- Gene is concerned about virtual meetings not allowing seniors, who are disenfranchised in this format, to participate. Gene suggests that the WPPA should table this discussion until the summer when we can have live meetings. He believes moving forward without in person meetings, sends the wrong signal to the community.
- Becky mentioned that she brought the idea of seniors and in person meetings to the WPPA and she agrees that like to see in person meetings.
- Bill wanted to remind us that we asked for 3 meetings and he encourages the alderman to do a survey about the WPPA does their virtual meeting this Thursday.
- Gene suggested that a survey needs to be conducted through the mail.
- Aaron suggested a comment box at Welles.
- Scott Michaels mentioned that parking on Saturday nights would affect the Queen of Angel's Saturday service parking.
- Peter Buol (Inside Publications) mentioned that seniors are very well informed and in normal times actively participate in neighborhood meetings. He also brought up the point that Old Town has Saturday night events and their parking lot is not big enough to begin with.

- Dan Boszhardt (neighbor) mentioned that as a neighbor of the park, he already deals with noise, traffic, parking and litter. Despite having two kids who play in the league, he does not want evening game cutting into family time at home.
- Sherry asked if there is a time period for WPPA to get community approval. She pointed out that we need to make sure we've heard from everyone.
- Bethany asked if the WPPA has asked for our support like last year and pointed out that last year they gave us two weeks to respond.
- Becky thinks that WPPA believes we already gave support. They may need a reminder before their community meeting on Thursday. Becky also thinks that WPPA may already be fundraising because they asked the Park District for a permit already.
- Aaron reiterated that we will have a WPAC meeting about this topic and asked for others to think about what our process will be to feel comfortable voting for support.
 - Bill requested that we wait for WPPA to hold 3 meetings and give us written feedback to review.
 - Gene reiterated that we need to have in person community meetings.
 - Sherry would like one of us to attend all the community meetings so we can vote based on the community voices. She would like us to be invited as there is a limit to how many can sign up for virtual meeting. Sherry also asked that we request that they record the meeting.
- Aaron confirmed that we push for more community engagement and asked Becky what weight the WPAC has on the final decision.
- Becky mentioned that the WPAC has a weighted voice as we are the recognized community organization.

Committee Reports

Greening Committee- Sue

The Greening Committee met in February. 2021 meeting dates were chosen and a calendar of events was loosely set.

Sue also attended the 47th Ward Nature Working group meeting. They are having Native Plant Sale soon and will be doing education about native plants which will be great.

Aaron brought up considering all the WPAC and Greening Committee, and other community events when planning. He also encouraged us to get events on the website.

Becky pointed out that Greening events are tentative. She also reported that the fencing in the areas where the plants were trampled last year will be coming soon.

Swim Team - Sherry

Sherry mentioned that the swimming program will have no competition currently, but it will be great to have kids in the pool.

Gazebo Concerts?

Becky mentioned that we may have a few concerts, but only with social distancing and if we have a lot of volunteers to help with distancing.

New Business

Planning

- Becky shared an idea from Bill (after he needed to leave meeting) about a puzzle exchange idea. Bill attended this type of event recently.
- Adrienne suggested another event like the Valentine Hunt.
- Sherry asked about work days
 - Becky mentioned that the It's Your Park Day is May 22nd.
 - Bethany pointed out that Greening set some tentative work day dates and Becky mentioned the monthly work days and asked that the WPAC members take over a couple of those months. Aaron agrees that the PAC could help.
- Scott asked about adding stone to the Gazebo. Becky said she would look into it. Scott also offered to trim the bushes around the Gazebo again.

Aaron asked for ideas to get more people involved in the WPAC.

- Sue suggested connecting with the 47th Ward Nature Group.
- Dan mentioned that he didn't know about our group until the light issue and he only heard about it from word of mouth.
- Sherry suggested that we all use of personal connections and more explicitly explain our process on the website.
- Sherry also suggested a running volunteer list of who can help with small events. She asked if we captured the email addresses from the Pitch in for the Parks events.
- Dan suggested that we think about what we specifically need from new members.

Aaron pointed out that a majority of emails the WPAC email account receives is about reserving the Gazebo or space in the park. He asked if we can put information on the website.

- Becky explained that she could put something together.

Other

Becky reminded us that active PAC members need to fill out a volunteer form and turn it into her. (insert link here)

Review Minutes – Adrienne votes to approve minutes from the January meeting, Aaron seconds, approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:35pm.