To: Clark Park Advisory Council

From: Rose Wehner

Re: Minutes of November 21, 2023 Meeting

Date: November 28, 2023

Attending: Eric Anderson, Rich Costello, Bill Donahue, Howard Luecke, Michael Manrique, Tom McManamon, Joey Nolan, Dean Santopaolo, Anne Vargo, Rose Wehner

Minutes of Meeting

Our meeting at Burning Bush Brewery began at 7:05. The minutes of our October 17, 2023 meeting were approved.

Park Report

Tom reported that a lot of new trees have been planted at Clark Park. Christy Webber’s firm is in charge of watering them. There have been some changes in personnel at Clark Park. Bob has moved to Welles Park. Rich Keefer replaced him. Andre has moved to Revere Park. His replacement is Isai Correa. The Park District put in a $400,000 TIF request for widening the paths at Clark Park. The request includes the container that our PAC asked for. There will be an ADA improvement on the south end of the dock. Another improvement will go on the north end. They’re adding batting cages to Kerry Wood. Players can also do pitching warmups there. They will replace the clay pitcher’s mound with portable fiberglass mounds. Tom didn’t have an update on Nature Play. DePaul College Prep entered into a three-year partnership agreement with CPD for using Clark Park and California Park. $10,000 of the $30,000 fee is for administration. DePaul will be using our open green space for sports. Their students will do 120 volunteer hours at the park per year. They’re still working on their field house which will be located in their parking lot. Eric said he met with Colleen McVeigh who is supervising work in DePaul’s new greenhouse. Jeff and Eric might work with her on some new projects. There is a new Clark Park sign on Belmont.

Treasurer’s Report

Rich informed us that there were no changes in our finances. Michael gave Rich a payment for a silent auction item he had purchased.

Work Days

Eric, Jeff Daube and Jeff Jenkins cut down buckthorn along the river bank across from the woods prior to a Lane Tech workday. 40 Lane students removed all of the branches leaving a clear view of the Chicago River. Eric planted some plugs along the river bank. He gathered some seeds from other parks which he will scatter along the river bank.

CAMBR Report

There was no CAMBR report because Jon couldn’t attend the meeting.

Digital Committee Report

This calendar year our website had 655 unique visitors who accessed the site 950 times. All 655 are new to this website. Peak traffic was related to the 5K. People found us on Google 403 times. 395 came directly. 40% used their desktop/laptop, 59% used their cellphone, and 1% used their tablet. Anne made a number of changes to the site. The Thank You listing, including the thank you to CPD, will be up all year. All of the 2024 work days are loaded. We now have an embedded donation page. There have been no changes to the Nature Play Fund. All recent proceeds have gone into general operating funding. Anne suggested we move some money from general operating into Nature Play. Bill recommended that we keep things the way they are until the TIF funding has been resolved. We’ll revisit this issue.

Work Day Saturday November 25 9:00 am to 12 noon

Eric plans to be there.

PAC Code of Conduct

CPD has revised the PAC Code of Conduct which will be effective 12/1/2023. It sets guidelines to follow if a PAC member violates the code. Rose and Howard participated in the online training orientation. Bill’s in-person session was cancelled. Violations of the Code go to peers on the PAC Governance Committee comprised of members of various PACs. Two of the violations mentioned were misuse of funds and failure to get permits for events. Violations are dealt with on a case by case basis and reviewed by The Department of Legislative Affairs. Members who handle money or work with children need to go through a background check. Members/volunteers who consistently volunteer for events also need to go through a background check. Park District employees have their own code of conduct. Tom attended a session on their code.

Eagle Scout Project

Joey Nolan, an Eagle Scout, presented a proposal to install three new sanded park benches in the back portion of the woods. The benches will be attached to the ground on an oak slab. 10-15 people will distribute wood chips in the area which was previously a parking lot. Joey will mark out the area this Saturday. Eric will be onsite. He hopes to begin work in mid-January. Eric moved that we approve Joey’s Eagle Scout project to build three benches in the woods. Michael seconded. Tom suggested Joey might want to label them when they’re done.

Band in the Park

Dean Santopaolo represents Large Mouth, a three-man band made up of his grandkids. Two will be entering high school next year. They can’t play at taverns because of their age. Dean distributed a list of the places they’ve played in the Chicago. He has approached Advisory Councils about playing in the parks. Sunday is probably the only day that will work for them. Tom said we will keep them in mind, but because of their limited availability it probably won’t work out. Anne suggested that he look into Chicago neighborhood festivals such as Retro on Roscoe, which often run from Friday through Sunday.

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CPD Migrant Policy

Bill distributed a letter from six Park Advisory Councils asking us to join them in opposing the use of Chicago Park Facilities for migrant housing because it does not comply with the mission of CPD. They feel that migrant housing will be detrimental to children and adults using the parks. They plan to send the letter to Mayor Johnson and other elected officials. We decided not to sign on to the letter. The letter is attached to the minutes.

Next Meeting

Thursday December 7 2023 at 6:00 PM at XOchimilco, 2030 W. Montrose. This will also be our holiday party. The restaurant has a BYOB option. Feel free to bring you own alcoholic beverages. The meeting ended at 9:03 PM.

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