

Welles Park Advisory Council
May 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Call to Meeting at 7:05 pm by Aaron Durnbaugh

Roll Call

Aaron Durnbaugh (WPAC President)	Chris Brandt
Bethany Simmons (WPAC VP)	Rose Buchi
Michelle Baldwin (Welles Park Supervisor)	Michael Szczech
Jeanne Mervine (WPAC member)	Brenda Rivera
Gene Schulter (WPAC member)	
Rosemary Schulter (WPAC member)	
David DeBoer (WPAC member)	
Claire Sharkey (WPAC member)	

Introductions

Executive officers, PAC (Park Advisory Council) members, and first-time attendees each introduced themselves.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from March were not available in time for review. They are now available on the website. Minutes will be approved at the July meeting.

Treasurer Report – Aaron

- Sarah could not attend. Aaron shared Sarah's report. There were no expenses and no revenue since the last meeting.

Park Report – Michelle

- Welles will have a Movie in the Park, July 17, Puss n' Boots
- Gazebo concerts will continue on Tuesdays this summer
- Registration for summer camp is full
- We still do not know about the pool lifeguard situation this summer. Michelle assumes we won't have enough lifeguards to have the pool open again this year.
- Lifeguard trainings are currently underway.
- A man that had been exposing himself to people in the park was arrested.
- Security cameras were installed in the building. A security system was also requested due to break-ins at the pool.
- Spring classes begin next week.
- Brush Park (gym on Rockwell) will have an event at Welles during Pride Week

- Eco Fest – we will have contingency rain space inside the field house
- Fall programs will be announced in August
- Michelle would like to get a new floor upstairs, like the basement – Michelle is hoping for the WPACs support in this effort
- Michelle would like to add new landscaping out front of the field house. She has mentioned to Jeanne of the Greening Committee.

- Gene asked if Michelle talked to the park district IT about their plan for district wide security. He also asked if Welles was on the list for Wifi upgrades. Michelle said she could check on both.

- David asked about the trash overflowing near the baseball diamonds. Michelle said she could check.
- Gene also suggested that in the past the WPPA collected their own trash and carried it to the dumpster. Michelle said she could check and even offer bags.

- David asked about outfield fences that have stayed up during the week. Jeanne and Gene said they used to be removed on Sundays. Michelle said she could ask.

- Michelle mentioned to Chris that the men in the horseshoe area at night lately have had marijuana and reminded us that it is illegal in the park.

Committee Reports

Greening Committee- Jeanne

- Sigrid has led 3 bird walks, seeing more species of birds each walk. Jeanne shared the list Sigrid sent of all 42 species at the last walk.
- We will have three mulching events this year
 - Spring Workday in April
 - It's Your Park Day on June 3rd from 9am-2pm.
 - Chicago Cubs Charities will also add mulch to trees on August 8. This was organized by the Chicago Park Foundation.
- Eco Fest will take place August 19. The 47th Ward is planning the event which will take place at Welles Park. Jeanne will meet with the Ward office tomorrow.

Swim Team – Michelle

- Sherry was not in attendance. Michelle shared that the team had an end of the year celebration.

Welles Walking Club - Gene

- There are still rat holes by the Obelisk at Lincoln and Montrose
- Trees were trimmed on Montrose. The trees on Sunnyside need trimming as well.
- Gene told Michelle he agrees that the curb appeal of the field house could be improved.

Gazebo Concerts - Michelle

- Sarah was not in attendance to discuss
- Concerts take place on Tuesdays, hopefully beginning in June
- Michelle would like a mix of family, orchestra, jazz, etc
- Sarah and Michelle have begun planning
- Michelle talked to Bill about scheduling one event. Bill will also be the MC for Tuesdays.
- Rose suggested the Irish Heritage Center as a resource to find performers.

Old Business

Midnight Circus

- We wrote a letter of support for funding from the city's Cultural Affairs. Currently the circus is in a holding pattern as the Midnight Circus did not receive the funding.
- Gene suggested that Aaron follow up and the PAC could have an emergency meeting if we do need to offer additional help.
- Michelle asked about what funds went back to the park in the past. Aaron explained the fundraising ability for the WPAC through ad sales and concessions. Gene explained the history of the Midnight Circus, fundraising and the Welles connection.

Pickleball/Horseshoe Pits Rehab

- Chris found that the pits have been at the park since 1930.
- WPAC send a letter to the alderman and park district CEO about supporting improving the horseshoe pits and lines for pickleball. We received a thank you from the park district but have not heard anything from the alderman. The park district responded that they are still looking into it.
- Jeanne asked who decides. Michelle explained that the decision would be made by the park district and the alderman.
- We can keep reminding the alderman about our support. Jeanne offered to mention the issue at her meeting at the office tomorrow.

Recognition Becky Kliber

- Aaron found out the costs would exceed the approved \$1,500. He would like to increase the amount to \$2,000.
- Gene motioned to increase the funds available for the recognition up to \$2,000. Rosemary seconds. Motion approved.

Eco Fest – August 19

- The alderman's office will organize the event.
- Bethany explained how the WPAC was represented at the event last year (PAC information, bird poster) and asked for ideas for this year.
- Aaron explained the situation with us being asked to be the fiscal agent last year for the Eco Fest sponsors. It was discussed but not needed last year. If they ask again this year, we need to set conditions.

New Business

Rosemary is concerned with the migrants taking over the park district buildings since it happened at Brandt Park. Michelle did not know who made the decision.

Michelle asked for ideas for what to do with the old crepe stand.

- Gene suggested to ask Owen at Gideon Welles for ideas
- Rose suggested she ask the owners of the hot dog stand at Horner Park

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 p.m.