

Welles Park Advisory Council
January 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Call to Meeting at 7:00 pm by Aaron Durnbaugh

Roll Call

Aaron Durnbaugh (WPAC President)	Monique Sandberg
Bethany Simmons (WPAC VP)	David DeBoer
Adrienne Roe (WPAC Secretary)	Claire Sharkey
Sarah Dandelles (WPAC Treasurer)	Rose Buchi
Michelle Baldwin (Welles Park Supervisor)	Tim Shambrook
Greg Czajkowski (Park District Area Manager)	Chris Brandt
Dan Boszhardt (WPAC member)	Michael Szczech
Jake Siddall (WPAC member)	Eden Essex
Sue Smock Lawson (WPAC member)	Lissa Claffey
Julie O'Connell (WPAC member)	Sid Lubitsch
Jeanne Mervine (committee member)	Sarah Staggs
	Mark Almberg

Introductions

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

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be approved at the next March meeting. Aaron went over voting rights of the various members and how to become a voting member by filling out the application and attending the last 2 meetings.

Treasurer Report – Sarah

Sarah presented the current financial report. The current balance is \$54,178.12.

- The Circus financial report is still pending.
- The Chicago Park Foundation Fiscal Sponsorship fee for 2023 has been paid.
- The 2022 Bank Statements were prepared for the Advisory Council binder.

Committee Reports

Greening Committee- Sue/Jeanne

- Jeanne Mervine, Greening Committee member, will be taking over as lead of the Greening Committee.
- In March the Greening Committee meetings will begin for 2023, likely the hour before the Advisory Council meeting to be convenient.

Swim Team – Sherry

- Sherry was not in attendance

Welles Walking Club

Dan explained the group and their interest in checking on the infrastructure at the park, but no new updates were given

New Business

Becky Recognition

Aaron asked for ideas for recognizing Becky now that she has retired

- Ideas mentioned: Rename NaturePlace, name NaturePlace kiosk, rename the summer music series

Greg mentioned that we need to seek approval for permanent items and that the approval could take a while, a few months. Greg requested that we email him with ideas in writing. He also made a few idea suggestions: Honorary street sign, rock, honorary bench, tree planted, rename playground

March Annual Meeting

Our next meeting, March 13 is our annual meeting. We will adopt our 2023 meeting dates and vote on officers. We will also approve committee budgets; Greening Committee. Sarah mentioned that she would like more details when requesting reimbursements. Jeanne said she could itemize reimbursement requests.

Queen of Angels Parking

The proposal for additional handicap parking spots has changed since we last discussed. After discussing the issue with the Alderman's office, Queen of Angels (Queen of Apostles Parish) is requesting to add three spots to the current handicap spots on Claremont Ave. This would bring the spots designated all the way to the garage driveway on the west side of the street. These spots would keep the same designated handicap parking times; 7:30am-1:30pm Sunday-Friday and 5:30pm-9pm Saturdays. The church and the Alderman's office would like a letter of support from us if we approve this change.

- Dan motioned to approve Queen of Angels adding three handicap parking spots on Claremont Ave. Sarah seconds and the motion was approved.
- Aaron will draft a letter to the Alderman.

Pickleball/Horseshoe

After several requests from community members, we worked with Becky Kliber (previous park supervisor) to create a proposal for adding pickleball courts to the park. Becky submitted a proposal the use part of the current horseshoe court area and the park district created a budget for this plan. The proposal was to add two courts and update the remaining horseshoe pits and add an area for playing cornhole. The Alderman put our proposal on his participatory budget menu and it was supported (along with traffic safety).

- Chris Brandt and Tim Shambrook asked if they could speak regarding this topic. They have a horseshoe group (60+ people and growing) that meets to play at the park. They usually play on Mondays and some other days during the week, beginning in April. They would prefer to keep all the current pits. They have also done some work already to improve the pits and had planned to continue improving the space. They wanted to express their concern with removing horseshoe pits for cornhole which can be played anywhere in the park.
- Aaron thanked Chris and Tim for bringing their concerns to our attention and asked Greg (CPD Area Manager) for an idea of the timeline for implementing alderman menu items.
- Greg explained that the money from menu items usually has a 2-3 year time limit. Once the park district receives the money from the alderman, Greg will ask for more information.

New Park Supervisor

Our new Welles Park Supervisor began this week, Michelle Baldwin. Michelle lives in the 47th Ward and has worked with the park district for 30+ years. She has worked with many Advisory Councils before, including as the supervisory most recently for Green Briar, Mather, and West Ridge.

Circus

Bethany asked if Aaron had heard back from Jeff (Midnight Circus) regarding our show of support. Aaron explained that Jeff is not requesting a letter of support from us at this time.

Lights Proposal

- Lissa Claffey asked if we could talk the baseball lights proposal. She expressed that many people still hadn't heard about the proposal and that there hasn't been enough information shared.
- Claire Sharkey added that she had received a pamphlet (created and distributed by Gene Schulter and Lara Weber) recently and hadn't known anything before. A pamphlet was shared with the PAC at this point and it was explained that Lara Weber also created a website. A group attended a Park District Board of Commissioner meeting recently and were told to create a petition. A committee of six people formed. They visited businesses to ask for their input. Claire explained that out of 75 businesses, 60 have signed the petition.
- Aaron gave some background information regarding this topic. The WPPA has a baseball lights proposal, which you can find on their website. We (WPAC) have tried to share

information to our website. Other groups may request to have information shared to our website as well. We held open meetings and conducted a survey. We mapped the survey responses as well and shared this information on our website. The WPPA requested that we support their proposal. We decided to not take a vote currently as this topic has been very contentious. The Alderman and the park district have continued with the process of considering the WPPA proposal and receiving community input. If we do eventually vote on this topic, it will be stated in the agenda which we will communicate.

- Greg explained as well that the WPAC has been neutral on this issue. He explained that the Park District has been working with the Alderman's office and you can send the Alderman's office your opinions. He also explained that he does not know about a deadline currently. The Park District held an open meeting on zoom in November and a survey was available at the park for people to fill out.
 - Someone expressed concern that they heard the WPPA had a table at the park, but the neighbors not being given the same opportunity. Greg explained that there was no WPPA table, only surveys which were more like comment cards provided by the Alderman.
- Claire mentioned that she met with the Alderman's office. She presented the petition and was told to give it to the park. Greg said he would take it to his boss, Stacy Ant.

Other

Invitation to Becky's retirement party at Gideon Welles on Thursday, January 12 and invited anyone to sign her farewell banner.

Encouraged attendees to stay involved in the park and to become members and attend volunteer opportunities and other meetings.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.