



## Wilmette Park District **Board Brief**

Updates of interest from your Wilmette Park District Board of Park Commissioners

### **Village Stormwater Project, Phase III Plans**

At the November 8 meeting, representatives gave a presentation on the Village Stormwater Project, starting off with a summary of all three phases. The focus on the presentation; however, was Phase III at Thornwood Park. Darren Olson with Christopher Burke Engineering reviewed the details for Phase III including a construction map, preliminary construction schedule, and the next steps with construction slated to being in March 2022.

President Murdock commented that given the volume of material to be removed from such a tightly confined space, “It’s clear that the village and the consultants have spent a tremendous amount of time developing a plan that will minimize the impact on the neighborhood and the nearby school.”

### **Approval of Easements for Village Stormwater Project**

Following the presentation at the November 8 meeting, project representative Darren Olson presented and explained the proposed easements for the Village Stormwater Project. These easements included the following:

- A permanent easement at Community Playfields to allow for the installation of a sensor system to monitor the level of water in the tank.
- A permanent easement at Hibbard Park for a new fire hydrant to be installed in the park at the end of Hill Street.
- A temporary easement at Thornwood Park where construction work will take place.
- A permanent easement at Thornwood Park which outlines the stormtrap vault including the inflow and outflow sewers.

These easements will be on the consent agenda at the next Regular Park Board Meeting in December.

### **Updates on the Gillson Comprehensive Plan**

Consultants of the Gillson Comprehensive Plan presented at the November 8 meeting. Scott Freres of The Lakota Group began the presentation with a brief overview and a summary of the Fall Community Engagement Opportunities which gathered feedback from the community regarding the latest concepts and add-on options for Gillson Park.



#### **Wilmette Board of Park Commissioners**

**Mike Murdock**  
President

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**Julia Goebel**  
Vice President

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**Lindsay Anderson**  
Commissioner

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**Cecilia Clarke**  
Commissioner

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**Patrick Duffy**  
Commissioner

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**Allison Frazier**  
Commissioner

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Between the three in-person events there were about 70 individuals who attended and participated. “We’ve done a significant amount of engagement, and engagement never ends – it continues through the process to make sure people are heard,” commented Freres.

Andy Tinucci of Woodhouse Tinucci Architects reviewed each of the four concepts that were discussed at the Fall Engagement Opportunities. He gave a brief summary of the overall feedback associated with each plan, and then reviewed the specific add-ons that can be opted in for any of the proposed concepts.

Tinucci also presented a new concept which, he explained, “stemmed purely from listening.” The consultants put together this fifth concept based off of the public and park board feedback.

## Public Comment

During the public comment segment at the November 8 meeting, a few concerns were raised relating to the Gillson Comprehensive Plan.

## Analysis and Discussion of Gillson Comprehensive Plan

In an effort to begin narrowing down the options and give consultants a more direct path forward, at the November 8 meeting, the park board gave their own feedback on the specific concepts and add-ons for the Gillson Comprehensive Plan.

Vice President Goebel began the conversation by suggesting, “we’re moving into an à la carte situation and perhaps we can eliminate plans altogether and note themes that are interesting to us.” Commissioners shared the same sentiment on several themes and add-ons, for instance, none supported option F for an ADA ramp at Lake and Michigan Avenues due to the consequential loss of trees. Commissioners also agreed to not pursue an additional restroom after understanding the cost and necessary work for installation. Several commissioners were interested in altering the Lakeview Center service drive to be more pedestrian-oriented, as well as adding boardwalks to the south beach dune area to begin preserving and re-establishing the natural landscape. “There has been damage over the years and if we can reverse that, it would be a benefit,” commented President Murdock.

When analyzing the circulation of the park within the 5 main concepts, commissioners felt they would be better equipped to pare down the options if they had associated costs. “The costs of the improvements are a really important factor in how we should be making these decisions,” commented Commissioner Duffy, “without those numbers it’s easy to say I like this or that.” Murdock requested that consultants provide estimates for certain options:

- Removing roads versus rebuilding the roads and sewer/drainage beneath them
- Relocating the park entrance farther along Michigan Avenue
- Adding a turnabout on Harbor Drive

- Creating a walking path in place of Middle Drive

Closing the discussion, Commissioner Kosloskus suggest the board discuss adding a picnic shelter, and determine a preferred location. Commissioner Clarke suggested the picnic area north of Wallace Bowl. The other commissioners supported this option. “It seems like a natural location – there are already picnic tables and it’s a hot area without much shelter,” said Murdock.

## **Lakefront Committee Report**

At the November 8 meeting, Vice President Goebel reported that the Lakefront Committee met with representatives for the Langdon Shoreline Protection project and reviewed options that allowed for bluff restoration and beach access. The committee is currently reviewing these options and will provide notes for the park board at a future meeting.

## **Golf Operations Committee Report**

Commissioner Duffy reported at the November 8 meeting that Commissioner Anderson will be stepping in as committee chair for the Golf Operations Committee at the next meeting.

Exciting improvements are on the horizon for the Wilmette Golf Club including improvements to the restaurant patio and bar. “Tinucci is getting us some drawings for that at the next meeting,” said Duffy. The Golf Cart Path project is keeping up with the timeline and project managers are hoping to finish on schedule by the end of the year.

## **Centennial Committee Report**

Progress was reported at the November 8 meeting for the West Park Master Plan. President Murdock gave an update that the results of a photometric study for the lighting of proposed pickleball courts showed they will be within the acceptable range of light, and zoning relief from the village will not be necessary. An entitlement process will be required due to the height of the light posts, and this plan will be brought before the board at a future meeting for approval.

Two options were brought before the board at the November 8 meeting for the relocation of the West Park playground, which is being moved for the proposed pickleball courts. Commissioners weighed the pros and cons between Option 1 which places the playground in the northwest corner of the playfields, and Option 2 which shifts the playground just north of its current location. With benefits to both locations, President Murdock pointed out that Option 2 confines a lot of activities to a very tight footprint. “There are some real advantages to moving the playground farther up to Option 1 – more space, more breathing room.” The committee plans to bring a proposal to the park board following a capital discussion at their next meeting.

Other highlights from the Centennial Committee Report include a surplus from Paddle Operations, and a dip in revenue from the Wilmette Tennis Club.

Centennial Ice is rebuilding their figure skating program, and Centennial Aquatics is preparing for increased public swim time, lap swim time, more weekend hours and opening the pool earlier to the public in 2022.

The Ouilmette Foundation is hosting their inaugural Centennial Paddle Classic the weekend before Thanksgiving. Learn more and register [here](#).

## Financial Planning & Policy Committee Report

Commissioner Clarke reported at the November 8 meeting that the park district is doing very well and exceeding the original projections for 2021. “We are starting 2022 in a very strong position,” she said. Clarke also explained that the tax levy for 2021 will be lower than it was for 2020.

## Real Estate Committee Report

At the November 8 meeting, Commissioner Kosloskus reported that the Evanston Transportation Alliance and Bike Wilmette were requesting a letter of recommendation from the Wilmette Park District to the NWRD to investigate the possibility for a canal bike path on the land the park district leases for Canal Shores. Kosloskus explained, “there’s essentially a gap they’ve identified in bike trails where the North Shore Channel Trail headed north stops at the border of Evanston, and you can pick trails up again on Sheridan Road or Green Bay Road.” The committee felt this was a reasonable request and have requested a template letter from the groups.

The Trustees of the Canal Shores Golf Course made a request for the Wilmette Park District to make an early renewal of their lease of Canal Shores land. They intend to improve the drainage problems and make improvements to the facility, and they need to raise funds for these improvements – but firstly, want a commitment from both Wilmette and Evanston for the land. With eleven years left on the current lease, the Real Estate Committee responded that they will review the release language with our attorney and wait to see Evanston’s decision.

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To read the full minutes from our past Board meetings, click [here](#). Minutes are posted after they are approved at a subsequent meeting.

Next Board meeting: Monday, December 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall at 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette. All meetings are open to the public. Details will be posted on the [Park Board](#) page on our website.

Meetings will be available on Channel 6 locally for Comcast subscribers. View a live meeting online [here](#), or view previous meeting recordings [here](#). Please check our [website](#) for updates.

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