



**THE LISLE PARK DISTRICT
JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL MEETING
March 29, 2023**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: President Altpeter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Director Garvy Called Roll:

Commissioners Present:

Altpeter
Hummel
Wessel

Staff Present:

Director of Parks & Recreation

Garvy

Superintendent of Finance, IT & Golf

Silver

Superintendent of Parks & Facilities

Cerutti

Superintendent of Recreation & Mktg.

Pratscher

Cultural Arts, Rental & Office Manager

Nadeau

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

President Altpeter led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Draft Strategic Master Plan Presentation by Next Practice Partners/Kimley-Horn

Director Garvy introduced Neelay Bhatt and Jason Elissalde from Next Practice Partners and Joe Cogswell from Kimley-Horn as the project team. Director Garvy reported the presentation is being recorded and it will be available on the project specific website at www.planlisleparks.com and the park district's general website.

Mr. Bhatt reported the strategic master plan looks beyond just the physical infrastructure of the park district and includes internal staffing, operations, programming, funding, and maintenance and helps identify where we are today, where do we want to be, and how do we get there. He reported the statistically valid survey more than any other data tool represents the entire community in a scientific, random and honest way. He summarized the community engagement process highlighting there were close to 1,000 participants through surveys, focus groups, and community meetings. He reported he had never seen such a high percentage respond to the survey, having performed over 150 of these nationwide. He said the importance of this sort of survey is that it touches users and non-users.

Mr. Bhatt explained some of the results of the survey and priorities they are recommending the park district consider as a result. He said as leadership you should focus on what is the greatest good to the greatest number of people. He reported that some of the highest priorities from the survey include an indoor pool, indoor walking/jogging track, and indoor recreation facility, saying they represented three of the top six priorities of the community. He reported paved trails, unpaved trails and small neighborhood parks rounded out the other three of top six. He said based on this, connectivity and indoor recreation space make up five of the top six highest priorities for investment. He reported top program priorities identified in the survey include adult

fitness and wellness programs, senior adult fitness and wellness programs, community special events and cultural enrichment programs and events. He reported just below these is pickleball lessons and leagues, which has seen a surge over the past few years across the country. He said there is a demographic shift with people living longer and staying active longer and that translated into the survey.

Mr. Cogswell reported they reviewed all parks and facilities, and said the district has excellent maintenance throughout the park district and excellent naturalized areas. He reported an emphasis should remain on existing buildings and facilities, and some courts are in need of ongoing attention. He reported playground standards are usually based on 15-year life, but Lisle has been successful in prolonging their life beyond that standard. Some of the opportunities that exist include adding more pickleball courts, a dog park, splash pad, additional picnic shelters, and increase wayfinding signs because many parks are not visible from the streets.

Mr. Bhatt explained equity maps that identify how far each park district amenity goes in serving the community and identifies where there are gaps in service and where there are overlaps in service. In referring to his slide show, he reported neighborhood parks are very well provided in certain area, specifically the west side of the park district, where there are gaps towards the east side, but explained that community parks cover those gaps. He reported ballfields are well situated and do not demonstrate an unmet need. He explained that where the service area extends beyond the Lisle Park District, there is an opportunity to reduce facilities in those areas while still satisfying the community's needs. He said while we are limited in land, the overlaps in service present opportunities to reimagine or repurpose certain amenities to fill gaps where we are underserving. He said these are areas where the park district can start to identify opportunities. He reported that for a district Lisle's size, he has not seen the level of overlap in playgrounds. He said this is an area where the District can consider repurposing for things like pickleball, splash pad, or other amenities that have gaps in services. He said the biggest issue is indoor recreation space and the gaps in the equity maps that demonstrate a need for additional indoor space based on the community's priorities.

Mr. Bhatt explained the process followed to develop park district values, which resulted in the four core values of inclusion, safety, stewardship, and impact. He briefly explained the importance and rationale of each one. He said the vision is explained as what do we exist to do every day. He introduced the new vision as "be community focused." He said if we follow our core values and practice our vision, the end result is the mission and what the park district wants to be known for, which is "A place where everyone belongs." He said this relates to the staff and the community. He said he sees so many visions and missions that are lengthy and difficult to remember, and that these are memorable, authentic, and easy to recall.

He stated the "big moves" that should be the park district's focus for the next five to ten years are additional indoor recreation space; balance staff recruitment and retention with future staffing needs; diversify revenue sources and pass a referendum; greater awareness and storytelling; and improve existing parks, trails, programs and amenities. He stated in order to accomplish the recommendations and community needs as identified in the plan, passing a referendum will be necessary or the major amenities the community has said they are willing to fund are not going to happen. He said every agency he has seen lately has struggled with getting enough staff. He said as we look to keep what we have, we need to take care of staff and said succession planning is very important considering the tenure of existing staff. Planning and building the next wave of staff is important. He said we will continue to struggle delivering services, and said automation and artificial intelligence will become a requirement, and said this will not

necessarily replace staff, but will complement staff and increase efficiencies. He reported most agencies struggle with telling their stories and considering the biggest reason our residents don't participate is because they are not aware of what is offered. As a result, the park district should improve its storytelling.

He stated the next steps are to provide a draft final report, collect any remaining feedback, and provide the final report. He asked for any questions.

Mr. Jason Dombroski asked if this presentation will be available online. Mr. Bhatt replied yes, all the strategic plan documents and presentations will be viewable online.

Ms. Liz Sullivan asked if the fitness center and/or fitness programs could be part of the Silver Sneakers Program. Director Garvy stated that the District looked into a few years ago and was told they didn't qualify for the program. He reported staff will look into it again and find out more details.

Ms. Teri Tapella stated she felt the presentation was great. She asked how the District could improve revenue beyond the community. Mr. Bhatt stated you have to spend money to make money, people like to experience top notch events and programs that will result in greater participation and appreciation, which often results in greater revenue. He recommended taking care of what you have and making appropriate upgrades.

Mr. Jason Dombroski asked if the District makes capital investments for the future, how long until you see a return on elevating current facilities and any increase in program revenue. Mr. Bhatt stated the revenue is usually 40-50% on programs.

Ms. Lorraine Krzywosz stated the power point was very interesting and asked if the Tate Woods project will incorporate some of the gaps in service. Director Garvy stated that process should start in a couple of weeks with engaging the park neighbors and others in the community. He said the park district is challenged with finding an appropriate balance between the needs of the community with what the neighbors will tolerate. He said that the project will focus on what the community wants.

Mr. Pat Cawiezel stated he is just here to support the park district as he recognizes the challenge in trying to satisfy everybody.

President Altpeter asked if there were any other questions from those in attendance. There were none. She asked if there were any questions from the park board.

Commissioner Hummel questioned how pickleball wasn't higher on the priority list, and also stated he can't support an indoor pool with the other fitness facilities closing in the area. Mr. Bhatt stated pickleball is a medium priority, but it has increased in priority likely more than any other activity in the past few years. He said this plan is not an all or nothing, but rather these are things staff and the board need to decide moving forward.

Commissioner Wessel asked how much of the list is looking at your neighbors and thinking they would like that. Mr. Bhatt stated there was an upswing after the pandemic and people are looking for areas where they can maintain a good life-work balance and hybrid opportunities and he does not see that changing a lot even post pandemic. He said the value of recreation has gone up and is essential, and he does not see that really changing.

Commissioner Hummel asked if there are more outdoor activities than indoor activities after the pandemic. Mr. Bhatt stated more people are recreating as a whole.

Commissioner Hummel asked if Downers Grove had plans to build a facility by 355 and Walnut. Director Garvy stated they are in the beginning stages of talking about it and there might be some opportunities for the Lisle Park District to collaborate with them.

Commissioner Wessel stated he does not think there is a lack of trails and President Altpeter added it's the connectivity. She said that would require other government bodies to get involved to connect them. Director Garvy agreed and said this strategic master plan is something other agencies can use to prioritize their initiatives, and he cited DuPage County and them using this to help advance their East Branch DuPage River Trail.

Commissioner Wessel asked how successful a referendum would be based on the numbers received on the survey. Mr. Bhatt stated that usually you need 2/3 of people to support it in a survey for it to pass. He said based on this survey, there is roughly 60% of the community that would support it. Director Garvy added if there was a referendum it would be led by a community steering committee focus group and referenced the process followed with the Sea Lion Aquatic Park referendum. President Altpeter added she was on the Sea Lion focus group and there was a lot of input from multiple user groups on what everyone wanted.

Director Garvy reported there are varying opinions from commissioners as to when this plan should be adopted and asked for direction. President Altpeter stated she feels strongly that this board started the strategic plan process, and she would like this board to be the one to adopt it.

Commissioner Hummel stated the next board would be the ones to implement it so it should be that board that adopts it.

Commissioner Wessel said he understands both sides and said he cannot see tying the hands of future boards.

President Altpeter stated this board went through the entire process including reviewing the proposals submitted, conducting the interview with the consulting team, receiving project updates and presentations throughout, and are the ones who made the commitment to take on this project. She added the whole board knew from the time the contract was awarded that it would be up for approval at this time.

From the audience, Mr. Dombroski stated he does not see the harm in delaying the approval of the plan until the new board is seated.

President Altpeter asked Mr. Bhatt how long he thinks it would take for a new board to get up to speed. Mr. Bhatt said in his experience, he has seen it take three to four months.

Director Garvy said when the process started in May 2022, the project schedule then and as reported throughout the process stated adoption in March or April, and until recently there were no stated concerns. He said adopting a master plan is a requirement for grants, and expressed concern with a timely application for the Tate Woods Park OSLAD grant, depending on how long it would take the new board to get up to speed on the entire master plan process.

Commissioner Wessel stated if the board approves now, the new board would be involved in prioritizing its recommendations. He said he does not want to delay the adoption if pushing back will threaten the grant application process. He said in reality the adoption does not commit to spending any money or agreeing to perform any of the recommendations.

President Altpeter asked if Director Garvy could reach out to Commissioner Costello to get his opinion. She said the board needs three votes to approve it. Commissioner Hummel stated he is not necessarily a no vote. Director Garvy stated he will reach out to Costello and get back to everyone.

Director Garvy thanked the consulting team, the park district staff, the community and board for their work on the entire project.

President Altpeter thanked the two incoming board members for being present tonight.

XV. ADJOURN OPEN MEETING

Commissioner Hummel moved to adjourn the regular board meeting.

Commissioner Wessel seconded.

There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote at 8:31 p.m.