

## **MINUTES OF LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** January 31, 2025

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Sunset Community Center

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Cladis, Commissioner Kaven, Executive Director Nicole Vickers, Supt. of Parks & Properties Carl Gorra, Supt. of Recreation Elliott Bortner and Supt. of Finance & Personnel Christy Powell.

**PRESS:** None

**GUESTS:** None

### **SUBJECT MATTER DISCUSSED:**

Executive Director Nicole Vickers went over the purpose of the committee meeting, which is to discuss the Short and Long Range Plan of the Park District. Each year the Geneva Park District updates and revises the Short and Long Range Plan Annual Goals and Objectives of the District. Executive Director Vickers shared that we will be reviewing the report in the order of each goal, first discussing the short/long range plan aspect of each goal and then discussing the ongoing aspect of the goal. As we move through the reports, each department head will highlight a few items within each goal, and if there are any additional points that Commissioner Cladis or Commissioner Kaven wish to be covered to let the staff know. These goals are reviewed by the Long Range Planning Committee and presented to the full Board for approval. Once approved by the Board, the plan is posted to the District's website. Input and direction for this process comes from program surveys, comment forms, Park District staff, the Board of Commissioners, the Master Plan, and the most recent Community Survey results.

Staff reviewed goal number one which is as follows: the Geneva Park District which will provide a safe environment at all programs, properties, and facilities. Supt. of Recreation Bortner highlighted the replacement of AED's at aquatic facilities as Starguard has recommended a new brand so with the routine update will also come a change in brands. Supt. Bortner highlighted the continued goal to add shade opportunities at ballfields across the district. Geneva Baseball has expressed interest in additional shade as well. Ongoing goals include continued communication efforts with parks department to investigate and communicate concerns raised by the public and to maintain an efficient checklist to make sure all staff and volunteers have updated applicable certifications for first aid, CPR and completed background checks. Discussion was had as to background checks and if they were ran on volunteers and Supt. Bortner stated they do run background checks on volunteers. Supt. of Parks Carl Gorra shared the parks department would be doing additional training on aerial lifts as they need to use, for example, when replacing a parking lot light. He highlighted the focus on Island Park south bridge and the eventual replacement. Discussion was had regarding the current restriction of vehicles driving over the bridge. The bridge is safe for pedestrian use but the bridge will need attention in the next five years. For ongoing goals, the district will continue to get park inspections on a routine schedule. Discussion was had how often those parks/playgrounds are inspected Supt. Gorra stated that each one is inspected monthly. Supt. Powell highlighted the review of policies and procedures at the two full-time staff meetings had each year. Employees review manuals required by PDRMA and Distinguished Agency at least once per year. Discussion was also had about security cameras and their various locations.

Staff reviewed goal number two which is as follows: The Geneva Park District will attempt to construct new facilities and acquire additional open space for new park sites and facilities to meet the needs of the District residents. Supt. Bortner highlighted the research of a potential future Friendship Station Preschool site. Executive Director Vickers gave an overview of the current IGA and indicated that she has been having continued discussion with the school district. The lease expires in 2026 and the school IGA requires notification by the end of the next year. Executive Director Vickers stated she has discussed with the School District Supt. The desire to extend usage of the site. Discussion was had as to why the school district would need more space and Executive Director Vickers stated the school district is seeing an increased need for special education students. Discussion was had in regards to the Districts following future population trends to help determine future enrollment. Supt. Bortner discussed the long-term goal of the development of the Peterson Property. Executive Director Vickers noted that per the community survey using the land for passive recreational activities was high. Supt. Gorra discussed the development of a long-range plan for the addition of amenities at Sandholm Park West. He also discussed working with the landscape architects for the development of Winding Creek park site. Executive Director Vickers discussed the OSLAD funding that was awarded for that project. Discussion was had regarding how the District investigates possibilities for acquisition of land parcels. Executive Director Vickers and staff identifies areas of interest and would bring to the Board for discussion of possibilities. Discussion was had about the skate park replacement and repairs. Executive Director Vickers stated before any enhancements are made to the skate park staff would consider the City's plans for future use of the land.

Staff reviewed goal number three which is as follows: the Geneva Park District will provide and maintain a quality system of existing parks and facilities by updating and improving each site per the most recent Community Survey and Master Plan. Supt. Bortner highlighted the replacement of windows at the Sunset Community Center would be forthcoming. He discussed the work on the reimagination of the Discovery Room at Peck Farm Park and the ongoing replacement of the filtration system at Sunset Pool. He also highlighted the goal of creating a dedicated home field for girl's softball and that they are including those who have requested improvements and/or dedicated fields. For ongoing goals, he highlighted the continuance of making annual improvements to a few athletic fields per year. Supt. Bortner emphasized that GBA expressed their appreciation for the ball field mix change improvements. He also discussed the continuance of holding annual shutdowns of SCC and SPRC to perform deep cleaning and preventative maintenance. Supt. Gorra highlighted entering the design phase of the exterior of SCC and that we are in discussions with architects and plan to submit drawings to the Board. Supt. Gorra for ongoing goals discussed the continue ADA improvements that are made. Discussion was had about how those improvements are requested. Supt. Gorra discussed the ADA audit that was done a few years ago. He also discussed the resurface of the Fox River Trail or portions as necessary. Discussion was had about the development of future bike paths and the ability to plan as new developers bring forth new neighborhood development projects.

Staff reviewed goal number four which is as follows: The Geneva Park District will provide creative programs and facilities to meet the needs of its residents per the surveys, Master Plan, and other research tools. Supt. Gorra discussed the short term goal of developing a plan for ongoing horticultural volunteer opportunities by way of a greenhouse volunteer program. Staff is looking at creative ideas to recruit volunteers such as trade space in the greenhouse for volunteer hours specific to horticulture. Supt. Bortner discussed the short term goal of hosting a grand opening event at Mill Creek Community Park and that is scheduled for May. Executive Director Vickers stated they did a grand opening already but that they wanted to do another celebration as some of the project was not yet finished during the original grand opening. Supt.

Bortner discussed the implementation of a nature preschool at Peck Farm Park. This is a new program that would take place the majority of the time outside if temps were above freezing. In addition, he discussed the long-term goal of researching the redesign of the website. Executive Director Vickers stated it has been a number of years since it was last revamped. Supt. Bortner highlighted the continuing goal to expand the cultural arts programs and special events as well as increase data driven marketing opportunities in relation to programs and events. He discussed the use of trail counters to assess attendance at the Winter Wonder Lights which should provide more data driven information for sponsorship. In addition, thru this technology they are able to assess where people are coming from for the event or where they are headed after the event. Supt. Powell highlighted the compliance with the FTC's new rule that was adopted January of 2025 best known as the "Click to Cancel" rule and its impact on fitness center memberships. Attorneys provided guidance on ensuring the District was in compliance and recommended some language changes in the District's fitness membership forms. Discussion was had about Settler's Hill and the maintenance of the running trail. Executive Director Vickers discussed the challenges of performing maintenance on the site as outlined by PDRMA. The land is currently maintained by Kane county Forest Preserve and owned by Waste Management.

Goal number five is as follows: The Geneva Park District will continue cooperative efforts with other governmental agencies and local service organizations to build strategic alliances. Supt. Bortner shared the goal of expanding co-op programmatic opportunities with the Geneva Library District. They are planning to co-host an event for teen laser tag at the library. Supt. Bortner highlighted the increased presence/awareness at non-park district community wide events. Currently we are working with Representative Ugaste on the Kids Day event. We have also done food drives, and toy shares. In the future there is plans to work with Swedish Days for a pickleball tournament. In regards to continuing goals the District continues to cooperate with the Youth Coalition to promote positive choices. For example, working with the Geneva Baseball and River Rats organizations. Supt. Gorra shared the plans to host a MIPE meeting to showcase Mill Creek Community Park and all of its updates and improvements. Mr. Gora shared ongoing promotion of cooperative training with other "like" agencies. He discussed the recent presentation by staff at a Garden Club event and continued opportunities for presentations at the annual IPRA conference. Supt. Powell shared that we are currently in compliance with the efficiency report requirements required by Illinois law. The report was completed in October of 2024 and filed with the Kane County Clerk. The next committee formation and report is due in 2034.

Goal number six is as follows: The Geneva Park District will continue to meet population growth demands by hiring additional personnel as needed, by retaining competent present personnel, and by training new personnel accordingly. The District is an equal opportunity employer and provides equal employment opportunities to all qualified persons. We will assure that the workplace culture for our employees fosters professional growth and assures an overall positive working atmosphere. We will dedicate ourselves toward enhanced use of technology by making improvements to the communications network, when necessary. Supt. Gorra highlighted the goal of ensuring all parks staff have job specific training and certifications necessary to ensure safe work environments throughout the District. Supt. Bortner highlighted the Culture Club which is a team of employees from the park side and recreation side that plan events to bring full-time employees together. They have been tasked this year with the job to reinvigorate the employee incentive program. For ongoing goals, Supt. Bortner highlighted the continued effort to retain and recruit new volunteers for the Peck Farm butterfly house, as well as assist with programs and operations. Supt. Bortner stated they could not run the butterfly house without volunteers so they are providing incentives for their continued service. Supt. Powell highlighted the goal to

ensure consistence standards are in place throughout the District for the notification of applicants regarding employment application process and status of position. She discussed the implementation of Paycom software and the goal to ensure consistency throughout the District whether you are a lifeguard or a parks maintenance applicant you should have a similar experience with the application/hiring process. In terms of tracking employee certifications, including CPR/First Aid that can also be accomplished thru the Paycom system. The District in January implemented the Paycom software for full-time employees. They now have the ability to monitor their PTO, time off requests and able to make changes to their personal information, such as, address, tax filing, etc. Supt. Powell discussed the Open Meetings Act training that is required within 90 days for all new Board members. This training is required annually for Freedom of Information Act officers.

Goal number seven is as follows: The Geneva Park District offers educational programs, classes, and stewardship opportunities that increase environmental literacy of residents and will adopt environmentally friendly business practices that are fiscally responsible to conserve resources, educate the community and provide best practice in resource management. Supt. Bortner highlighted the short-term goal of developing a volunteer stewardship program that focuses on enhancing biodiversity in natural areas and removing invasive species at Peck Farm Park. Supt. Gorra highlighted the short-term goal of developing a turf fertilizer and seed control program that addresses our athletic fields and high visibility parks. Organic fertilizers can be impactful and environmentally friendly. Supt. Gorra highlighted the continued replacement of vehicles and equipment with electric. Discussion was had about the required maintenance and number of hours/miles electric vehicles and equipment provide. He discussed the continued plan to install charging stations and the grant funding for this project. He discussed the replacement of ball field lights to LED light fixtures. Discussion was had regarding the process to convert current field lights to LED which does not require replacements of the existing poles. This goal is considered in conjunction with also complying with the Dark Sky Initiative. Supt. Powell highlighted that with the implementation of Paycom software they will reduce the amount of new hire paperwork as it will all be electronically completed and stored.

Goal number eight is as follows: The Geneva Park District will strive to strengthen and maintain fiscal health and stability. Availability of funding and overall good financial health is a prerequisite for carrying out some of the goals and objectives of the District. Supt. Gorra highlighted the application process for the ITEP grant program to secure funding for eligible projects. Supt. Bortner highlighted the need to research grant opportunities for facility and program improvements. He also discussed the implementation of revised member retention strategies across both BestLife Fitness centers to capitalize on current member market. Focusing on current memberships and keeping them happy. Supt. Powell highlighted that the Illinois minimum wage law final increase was seen on Jan. 1, 2025. In addition, the District will implement the IL Equal Pay Act to include pay scale and benefits in any job posting as well as ensuring the continued notification of all current employees after an external job is posted. The District over the long-term will collect Data on bid forms to have contractors self-report whether they are eligible to be a certified vendor under minority-owned, women owned or veteran administered programs. Per Illinois law, this information should be published by taxing districts which indicates certain vendor diversity from all vendors and subcontracts. Supt. Powell highlighted the next months issuance of Limited General Obligation Bonds and how that is an important funding source for the Capital Improvement Program. She highlighted the maintenance of Fund Balance keeping balances at levels per the District policy. She discussed the need to continue to maintain the District's Certificate of Achievement Award from GFOA demonstrating transparency and full disclosure in the District's financial statements.

Executive Director Vickers then shared that enclosed within the packet are the completed goals from all departments over the past year. Discussion was had on the number of accomplishments over the year and the Winter Wonder Light event success and the continued use of Wheeler Park for the Folk Festival. With no questions or comments staff moved to the Master Plan.

Supt. Powell shared that included in the packet is the five-year capital improvement plan. She reviewed the revenues and expenditures highlighting capital funding that comes from the annual audit transfer, bond issues and grant revenue. Discussion was had about budgeting revenue for projects that are grant eligible even though the grant has not been awarded yet. She stated we include that revenue as a source for planning expenditure purposes. Executive Director Vickers noted that should the Board decide, the project may still proceed even if the grant source of funding is unavailable.

Executive Director Vickers discussed the list of CIP fixed cost items and Supt. Gorra covered the vehicle and equipment replacement schedule. Supt. Gorra covered the fleet replacement list for the next fiscal year. The list includes vehicles that are worn out or deemed time for replacement before possible safety concerns. Executive Director Vickers reviewed the estimated replacement year of the various parks. Discussion was had about the ownership of Good Templar Park which is not owned by the District and the 50/50 cost share for replacing two of the Parks co-owned with Batavia Park District.

Executive Director Vickers discussed the future full-time and part-time personnel needs. Discussion was had if the need for an Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Personnel still existed given the implementation of Paycom. Supt. Powell stated the District will need to evaluate the efficiencies provided by that software. Executive Director Vickers discussed the future need to add a new Parks Specialist employee as the addition of Mill Creek and Winding Creek will require more labor. She also highlighted the need for a part-time administrative assistant to assist the parks department. Also discussed, was an additional recreation personnel position that will be needed in the future as we see continued growth in recreation.

With no further discussion, the committee meeting ended at 3:37 PM.

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Secretary

Submitted By: Nicole Vickers / Christy Powell