

Parks & Recreation Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
March 21, 2022

**Village of Homer Glen
14240 W 151st Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491
Village Board Room**

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Co-Chair Rose Reynders.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**3. Roll Call.**

Present at 6:00 p.m. were Co-Chair Nicole La Ha, Co-Chair Reynders, Members Ed Cryer, Russ Knaack, Dale Janssen, Dan Kenney, Bob Kman, Regina Robinson.

Also Present: Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Amy Blank, Superintendent of Parks and Facilities John Robinson.

Members Absent: Marty Pavlik.

4. Approval of Minutes.**a) February 28, 2022**

Member Kman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2022 Committee meeting; seconded by Co-Chair La Ha. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

No amendments to the agenda.

6. Public Comment.

Jeff Peterson (and Brad Oedzes, who did not speak but came in support of Mr. Peterson) spoke regarding Evelyn's Gate North Park. They both live in the subdivision and are on the HOA Board. They had a number of questions/issues to address:

1. Will the large pavilion be paved? – Superintendent Robinson said it is on our list of things we'd like to do, but it has not been budgeted for at this time. This year we will be evaluating all of the newly acquired parks and will be prioritizing projects based on safety first. Co-Chair La Ha asked that the list of "things to do/things needed" be shared with Co-Chair La Ha and Co-Chair Reynders.
2. At some point in Evelyn's Gate North park there were some gravel paths which they have never been fully removed. Can they be removed? – Superintendent Robinson said that the parks staff has removed most of the gravel, and since the remaining gravel isn't a safety issue there isn't a plan to remove all of it at this time.
3. There were some trees removed from the parkway. Will these be replaced? – Coordinator Blank clarified that, at least the tree on Syd Creek, she was the one that had our tree specialist take a look at it and it was determined that it needed to be removed. Normally, the Village has participated in a tree replacement program

each fall, where that tree would have been replaced. The program did not happen last year and we do not know yet if it will be in the budget for this year.

4. Can we get a garbage can and a bench in the small pavilion? If the Village cannot provide a bench right now can the HOA purchase a bench to place in the pavilion? Superintendent Robinson said he would look at the current budget and see if there is anything left to purchase a bench. The bench needs to be certified and listed for public use. He also said that he would look into getting a garbage can over there. The Village will not put a garbage can by the south pond, as that is not Village property.
5. Mr. Peterson also mentioned that the small pavilion does have power, so if the Village wants to use it, the HOA is willing to share it with the Village.

John Walters – addressed the committee to share his displeasure with the cul-de-sac road that is planned to be constructed in Heritage Park. He asked the committee to help the Board to “do the right thing” and “nix” this project.

Mark Gawron – echoed what Mr. Walters shared. He also is asking the committee to help the Board “do the right thing” and “make the right decision” regarding the cul-de-sac road.

7. Reports from Co-Chairs.

No Report from Co-Chair La Ha.

Co-Chair Reynders shared that she had a conversation with Michelle Kerfin regarding the Veterans Breakfast that Michelle puts on each month. Co-Chair Reynders thought it would be a good idea to go to the breakfast and ask the Veterans what they would like to see in a memorial. The committee agreed that this was a good idea! Monday, April 4 at 7:30 a.m. is the next breakfast.

Co-Chair Reynders also did some research on the bricks for memorials. It was \$150 per brick and names are engraved on the bricks. She'd also like to acknowledge all of the different branches of the military.

1. Old Business

- a) Update on RFP for Active Core playground equipment (2-5 and 5-12). Superintendent Robinson shared that the RFP was completed and was supposed to be posted on the website that day. It was not, so he will follow up in the morning to make sure that is done. A copy of the RFP was given to each committee member and Superintendent Robinson quickly went through the RFP and pointed out what it includes. We should have all bids by April 15 so that the committee can look over everything on April 18.

Member Kenney asked if the scope of this work is similar to Glenview Walk park and Superintendent Robinson said no, this is less. Member Kenney wanted to know after approval of Glenview Walk, how long did it take until completion.

Superintendent Robinson said 10-12 weeks and that he has no idea how long this project could take considering the equipment delays we've already seen.

Member Kenney also noticed that Stonebridge park is partly mulch and partly pour-in-play and wondered if this is something that we can consider. Superintendent Robinson said that pour-in-play is better for accessibility and inclusivity. Mulch, even if it is ADA, it is not actually inclusive.

Coordinator Blank interjected while on the subject of Stonebridge that the pour-in-play at that park is deteriorating and needs to be replaced. This is what Superintendent Robinson has remarked in the past about not just focusing on new parks, but also remembering that the older parks need restoration and repair.

b) Discussion on future development of Heritage Park.

The committee looked at the plans that were originally drawn for Heritage Park. The committee agreed that most of the original vision has, in fact, come to life. At this point, it doesn't make a lot of sense to throw everything out and start again. In terms of projects, the committee would like to:

- Complete the Active Core playground (2-5 and 5-12 age group)
- Veterans Memorial
- Splash pad/ice rink/parking/pavilion/play area
- Amphitheater/performance pavilion

There was discussion about an email that was sent to the committee members from resident John Walters regarding the cul-de-sac road and the idea of parking being created by expanding the already existing ring road. The committee agreed that parking is necessary for the park and while they may be interested in pursuing this idea in the future, as there are no concrete plans in place for that idea it is not something that is to be discussed at this time.

The committee would like to go out to bid for the remaining projects on the list. Co-Chair Reynders is planning on budgeting \$250,000 for the Veterans Memorial.

There was some discussion about a splash pad that doubles as an ice rink. Superintendent Robinson encouraged not doing an ice rink. He feels like the Village does not have the resources to staff and maintain an ice rink.

Committee member Knaack is in favor of the ice rink and has volunteered to manage the Zamboni. He likes that it doubles the usage of the space.

Member Kenney is in favor of doing a simple "splash pad" – something similar to Millennium Park – simple, artistic, interesting to look at. Something more along the lines of a sculptural fountain rather than a playground with water. Also, the simpler we make the water feature the easier it may be to incorporate an ice rink.

Superintendent Robinson also supports this idea. He thinks it would work well to have a simple fountain/water feature with a playground area next to the water feature – so that the kids who don't want to get wet can still enjoy the area.

Member Janssen asked about the money from the Homer Glen Foundation and Co-Chairs Reynders and La Ha explained that that money that was originally set aside for the Village has been rescinded. Co-Chair Reynders is requesting money be set aside in the upcoming budget for the Veterans Memorial.

Member Janssen also asked about restrictions regarding sponsorship/donations and it was stated that as long as the Village is not in litigation with a company, there are no restrictions, as far as the Co-Chairs and Superintendent Robinson knew.

Member Kman asked if this is all that needs to be done in Heritage Park (referring to the list above). Superintendent Robinson said there were a few additional plans for the park in the architectural plans like the development of the open play area (where the soccer fields will be) and the development of the fishing pond (addition of a fishing pier). In his opinion these plans, in particular, are unnecessary. Also, there were plans to do the Village Green – walking paths/landscaping/etc.

Member Knaack thought the list that the committee agreed upon is enough for now and that the Village does not need to spend money on Heritage Park, just to spend money. He'd like to see this current plan in place and then have the committee turn its focus on the existing parks, which will need repair/restoration.

Member Kenney asked a question regarding something that resident John Walters said about moving events to Trantina Farm. The Co-Chairs refuted this idea and said there is nothing concrete in the works that they are aware of regarding an event center at Trantina Farm and that the Village has no plans at this time to move events off property.

2. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

3. Reports and Communications from Staff.

a) Parks and Facilities Superintendent Update.

Superintendent Robinson reported that the new foreman, Jennifer Vittori, has started. She comes to the Village with a lot of experience regarding open space, landscaping, park districts, etc. They are also tracking all work using the iWorks system that Public Works is using. They are getting equipment ready, ordering parts, etc.

Superintendent Robinson also addressed some of the concerns/comments that residents Walters and Gawron brought forward. First, the grant is not transferrable. What the Village could do is decline the current grant that was awarded and re-apply for another grant for a different project. Also, the parks staff does do its best to keep the paths clear during the winter, but we don't work on the weekends, and he personally has received many comments from parents complaining about having to walk through the Active Core to access the sled hill. Another thing that resident Walters said is that the paths that are currently in Heritage Park (and around the Active Core) were designed for emergency vehicles to access. Superintendent Robinson said this is not true. It is 2" of asphalt on that walking

path and not designed for vehicles to go on it. He is concerned that during the HomerFest, when band vehicles are going to be routed through the park on the walking paths that those paths will be destroyed. He also explained that yes, while the poles that are in place to deter vehicle traffic on the paths can be dropped down to allow vehicles, they often freeze in the winter and the staff is not able to drop them down at that time.

Superintendent Robinson also made a comment about the proposed Trantina Farm event center. He said that regardless of what is happening at the Township or anywhere else, in his opinion, he believes that the Village should make accommodations for itself so it is not beholden to any other entity.

b) Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Update.

Coordinator Blank gave an update that all of the park rules signs were ordered and delivered and will be going up in the parks soon. Also, an agreement was made with Parvin-Clauss and that the company came back to us saying they wanted to make a change and not do the wood texture. Coordinator Blank will work with them to make sure we get what we asked for.

There was discussion about the soccer in Heritage Park. The contract has not yet been signed because there were some things that needed to be updated in the contract. The Royals FC did already open registration and are hopeful they fill up.

Superintendent Robinson shared that he received a request from another soccer club interested in using the fields. Superintendent Robinson told them they will need to come to the committee if they would like to request usage of the fields.

Member Knaack added that the committee didn't really address what is to happen if another organized club wants to use the fields when the Royals aren't using them. How does the committee feel about that?

Co-Chair Reynders said no, we have a contract with the Royals and that is the priority.

Member Knaack is concerned that if other organized groups use the fields, then the fields will get worn out.

It was stated that the committee and the board did decide when voting on the soccer fields that the general public can use the fields when not in use by the Royals, but that allowance does not include other organized groups.

4. Committee Member Updates

Member Kman asked if the parks that are new included the Trantina dog park and the answer is no. Superintendent Robinson explained that the Township wants to annex the Trantina properties into the Village (so it will have a Homer Glen address), but it will continue to be owned by the Township.

Member Kman also asked about the old firehouse bricks that are still standing on 143rd street. It was explained that the owner of the property did give the Village

permission to take the bricks. There was some discussion in the past about rebuilding that brick structure in Heritage Park or doing something else with the bricks as a monument to the volunteer firefighters. Coordinator Blank explained that she looked into this 2 years ago and in speaking with brick experts found that what is left from the firehouse is not a brick that would likely be sustainable for a re-purposed project. It is thin glass brick veneer over concrete blocks.

Committee member Robinson is still in support of re-purposing them in some way as a memorial in Heritage Park. Even if a small portion of a new memorial included the old brick, she thinks that would be a nice homage to the history of Homer Glen.

There was support on the committee to include historical elements in the park or to work with the library to create a historical society/preservation for Homer Glen.

12. Adjournment.

Member Knaack made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Cryer. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Amy Blank

Communications & Recreation Services Coordinator