

SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024
FRANKFORT, IL – FOUNDERS COMMUNITY CENTER
6:30 p.m.

- I. Call Committee to Order – President McCarey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
Attendance: Commissioners Ruvoli, McCarey, Barz, Ponton, and Gentry; Executive Director, Gina Hassett; and Mary Strand, Recording Secretary.
Absent: None
Guest: Mr. & Mrs. Olszewski, Teresa Dornan, Dan Zakula and Mike Tobias.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment – Gina noted that the residents present represent Five Oaks. They are not HOA Board members. Gina said that she attended the HOA meeting on June 18th and that FPD was on the agenda. She asked if she could speak at that time and was told it was preferred that she not speak at all because they were in litigation. She is not sure that the residents of the HOA are even aware that the HOA is suing FPD. Some of the residents that are here in attendance spoke at the HOA meeting. The HOA stated that the only reason they are suing FPD is because the District failed to pay their taxes. Park Districts do not pay taxes! The suit came about due to many factors. Gina went to the meeting to let the residents know that the FPD Board is still working toward a resolution. She had a statement to read that was approved by counsel and was not given permission to speak. The last three paragraphs of the statement were read by Gina and are as follows:

The Park District and HOA have engaged in settlement discussions over several months. However, the HOA has demanded certain design plans and an unrealistic time frame, that the Park District cannot accommodate. The lots in question are not private lots for the HOA. Rather, they are owned by the Park District and feedback from the entire community (not just the HOA) is required. In addition, the Park District has to work within its budget, and work with the Village about obtaining the necessary permits for any design and cannot operate simply on the HOA's timeframe.

The land belongs to the Park District. The debt or unpaid assessments is associated with a prior landowner and not the Park District. The HOA is trying to foreclose on Park District property to satisfy a debt belonging to another party.

The Park District has filed another motion to dismiss and intends to vigorously defend this matter. The Park District is left with no other choice due to the HOA's prosecution of this matter. This is costing the taxpayers (including the HOA residents) a significant amount of money in legal fees having to defend this matter. The HOA residents are not only funding their won complaint, but also funding the Park District's defense as well. The longer this case goes on the more it will cost the residents.

Board will not say. However, President McCarey told everyone that the HOA has changed their minds several times. Commissioner Gentry said the HOA's plan is not what FPD is willing to commit to. Gina added that FPD is not willing to commit to the demands of the HOA not because it is unrealistic but is not within budget and timelines. We work to comply to ADA and need to be thoughtful of design and implementation. FPD cannot be tied to an HOA demand. This park parcel does not solely belong to this Board, the HOA and it's residents, but to all 20,000 plus residents of Frankfort Park District. FPD does not want to set a precedent to negotiate with a 7 member HOA board. Commissioner Ruvoli said that there is a process of getting resident feedback, developing

a design, and engaging focus groups before a final plan and budget are approved. Mr. Zakula just wanted to make sure that all residents have equal say in what happens to the park. Commissioner Ruvoli gave an overview of the process. Mr. Zakula wanted to be assured that FPD would have to sell the park parcel. The expectation is that the judge might force FPD to pay the fees that the HOA is demanding. Commissioner Ruvoli explained that FPD has a Five-Year plan that the Five Oaks park parcel would have to roll into. Mr. Zakula said that he is confident that most residents of the HOA are not insisting that the park be developed immediately but the concern is that they don't want to have it developed with houses.

Mrs. Olszewski stated that she, her daughter and husband attended the hearings to show that they are very supportive of FPD. She said all here tonight support FPD. There were about 50 residents in attendance at the HOA meeting and some expressed interest in hearing what the issues were because the HOA is hasn't let them know. The motion to dismiss was filed today.

President McCarey noted that the Board has been on the same side throughout the lawsuit. Commissioner Gentry said FPD is also incurring substantial legal fees and that is money that could have been spent on the park. Teresa Dornan said that it is aggravating to the residents because they are paying on both ends. President McCarey said that FPD is not giving up.

Gina gave an overview of how FPD became aware of the parcel belonging to a trust. She complimented Belinda Olszewski on her efforts to have the parcel returned to FPD along with the assessor of Green Gardens to get the zoning corrected and The Village to put a lien on it for mowing that got the trust to give the parcel back to FPD. Mike Tobias commented that he bought the parcel next to the park because he wanted the corner lot and be near a park. He cleaned part of the park and Mr. Tobias complimented Dave Gow in FPD Maintenance Dept. on the hard work he has done to clean up the property and mow. He was happy to hear that FPD Board was not giving up on it and would be happy to help out. The voting in the HOA was discussed. Mrs. Olszewski said that many of the HOA residents were interested in hearing Gina speak, but the Board would not let her. President McCarey thanked the group and they left the meeting.

IV. Administration –

- A. Tax Objection Settlement – There is not update. FPD attorney sent a counter offer of \$10,000 and Gina has not heard back.

V. Facility & Property Update

- A. Park Maintenance – It was discovered that someone dumped lawn debris over the fence at Windy Hill Park. The debris is substantial and mowing cannot be done there along a 60 foot fence. No further incidences at Commissioners Park.
- B. Windy Hill OSLAD Project – The final walk through is tomorrow. There is a few spots of water. Families have expressed that they really like it. There is standing water under the trampoline. Gina suggested that a rededication be held in September when the grass has grown a bit.
- C. Laraway Road Property – road expansion- no update.

- D. Land Donation- Staff has heard back from Mr. Stuenkle through email. Before the Board moves forward a draft from our attorney needs to be shared. As long as it is unrestricted FPD would be interested in it. And it would need to be annexed.
 - E. Five Oaks Park Property – Gina received an email today from FPD attorney and printed a copy to share with the Board. It will be discussed in the Executive Meeting.
 - F. Indoor Facility Exploration – Gina supplied all with copies of the survey. Williams Architects will present at the July 9th meeting. They will talk about what they found through the survey and the Town Hall. Commissioner Ponton asked if the Board could get a copy of their presentation prior to July 9th. She also handed out a copy of the election cycles for the next few years to determine what the opportunities are if it is decided to move forward with a referendum. She talked to Paul Handley, Beyond Your Base. He will put together a proposal after the 2024 election to help educate the residents. The commissioners discussed doing phased approach, partnering with a private donor or other entity. It's time to talk to the Village to discuss results and/or a partnership. Discussion was held. Gina suggested a letter to the Village Mayor and Manager to keep them informed about what people want.
 - G. Fort Frankfort – Gina shared drawings of the proposed design for the replacement to the fort. Commissioners reviewed and suggested elevating the Grainery and slide. And building a bigger climbing wall. There may be a component that is not accessible. The fencing is not shown on the renderings.
- VI. Athletic Field Agreements – Gina explained that she received a complaint regarding Boys Baseball. The younger boys program has expanded quite a bit and they use smaller fields. One of them is at Lakeview. The resident next to the park has an inground pool and now there is much more noise from all the activity. People are parking too close to their driveway and walking close to their fence. Commissioner Gentry said he is concerned about the safety of the children.

Warriors Organization was part of FPD until 2021. A draft copy of the most recent affiliates agreement was included in the packets. The Warriors wanted things that FPD didn't typically do for groups from a Recreation program. When FPD split from the Warriors, our staff helped to transition them by, among other things, saving the gym space and providing staff at the schools and they would reimburse the park. Currently we allow them to have gym access at the schools through FPD. That means they did not pay rent to the school, but paid FPD to administer the program. The person in charge of the organization did not want to follow the rules and now the school doesn't want to rent to them because they were very rude. When FPD staff went to the school to discuss using facilities for the Day Camp, they brought up the problem to Gina. Now the group wants to come back as an affiliate. But they have many participants who are not residents of FPD as they are a private traveling team. They have tryouts and cut many of the participants. The school has since installed new software and has a new person in charge. The bigger issue is that the school doesn't have the staff to staff the evening rentals. The school district does not want to be in the rental business. FPD does not pay for using the facility. It was discussed to make the Warriors pay more. The Warriors should pay Class 3 fees. President McCarey feels that this is not FPD's problem. Discussion was held. The consensus was the Warriors need to resolve with the school themselves.

A. Travel Programs

VII. Miscellaneous –

- Gina told the Board that the 4th of July events will be held next week. Frankfort Baseball will offer concessions and they are excited. FPD staff is selling glow lights. The permit through the fire department has been procured. Gina and staff are preparing for cancellation in case of rain.
- The tickets are available for Pours for Parks. Let Gina know how many packs of tickets you need.
- Gina let the commissioners know that it is time for her contract renewal and review. She will send them the Google evaluation sheet. Her contract needs to be updated with her current salary and car allowance. It is Gina's 8th Anniversary month.
- Commissioner Barz asked if a hole in the driveway to Commissioners Park could be filled. Gina will notify Ed.
- Commissioner Barz noted that the former Mayor of Frankfort, Raymond Rossi, passed away.
- Commissioner Barz asked for a “no parking” sign by the entrance to the garden plots.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – *President McCarey asked for a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the purchase or lease of real estate 5 ILCS 120/(2)(5); Personnel ILCS 120/2(c)(1); imminent or pending litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(2)(c)(1); and finances. Commissioner Gentry so moved and Commissioner Barz seconded the motion. Hearing no objections all present voted Aye. Motion passed by a voice vote at 7:44 p.m.*

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION - With nothing further to discuss, President McCarey asked for a motion to end the Executive Session and return to the Open Session of the Committee Meeting. *Commissioner Ponton so moved, and Commissioner Gentry seconded the motion. Motion passed by a voice vote at 7:55 p.m.*

(Commissioner Ponton left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.)

IX. ADJOURNMENT – With nothing further to discuss, President McCarey asked for a motion to adjourn the Committee Meeting at 8:12 p.m. *Commissioner Ponton so moved, and Commissioner Gentry seconded the motion. Motion passed by a voice vote at 8:12 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Mary T. Strand
Board Minutes Secretary