SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026
FRANKFORT, IL – FOUNDERS COMMUNITY CENTER

I. Call Committee to Order – President McCarey called the meeting to order at 7:40p.m.
Attendance: Commissioners McCarey, Ponton, Ruvoli, and Gentry.
Also Present: Gina Hassett, Executive Director; Edward Newton, Supt. Building and Grounds; and Mary Strand, Recording Secretary.
Absent: Barz
Guest: None

II. Public Comment –None

III. Facility & Property Update –

A. Indoor Recreation Center Planning.- Gina discussed the Frankfort Fire District proposed referendum to levy additional taxes. It would be a permanent tax of approximately $108 per One Hundred Thousand dollars of assessed valuation. It would impact FPD's decision to float a referendum for an Indoor Recreation Center at the same time. If they cannot pass the referendum for "life safety" then it would probably not pass for FPD. New Lenox has paused their referendum.
Commissioner Gentry wants to convince School District 157C to reduce their taxes. They stockpile money that they are holding on to and keep raising their taxes. Discussion was held.
The appraisal was done at the facility that FPD has engaged in discussion for the purpose of purchasing. The owner wants the purchase in the high teens. FPD's appraisal was $7million, the owners appraisal was $9million but he still wants closer to $18million to sell the facility. Commissioner Barz previously indicated he is favor of purchasing this facility, paying around $10million and having the owner right off the balance as a donation for tax breaks.
Commissioner Ruvoli is not in favor of the current proposed facility. He would like to pause pursuing the referendum and put out statements saying that FPD is still considering an indoor recreation facility but given the economic uncertainty we will reconsider at a later date.
Commissioner Ponton reviewed the appraisal.
Gina learned that Chelsea School has 28 school rooms that they are not using. The PreSchool could move there. There is an elevator, but the building needs improvement in life safety. The costs would be approximately $2million. FPD already uses the gym after hours

currently. She did tour the vacant rooms. The commissioners had favorability towards using the school.
Commissioner Gentry was in favor of the school. He would like to tie FPD's referendum in with Chelsea School's reduction of taxes. A serious discussion needs to be had with them.

B. Dog Park – Commissioner Ruvoli asked about the grading of the land and water runoff at Michele Bingham Park that was one of the concerns by the residents. Ed said that the water runoff is in the area adjacent to the proposed project. There is a change in elevation and the water runoff comes from the south, crosses under Old Plan Trail and runs along the Cemetery and then by the back yards of the subdivision. The water is seeking the creek in the area. There is a swale that will not be touched by the development of the Dog Park. There will not be major displacement of the dirt. The reasons that Michele Bingham Park was chosen is the open green space and adequate parking. The size of the proposed enclosure is in line with other Dog Parks. The usage reports of the current Bark Park is eight to thirteen permit holders a day from sunrise to sunset. The report shows that there is a decline in revenue for the current Bark Park. So there isn't a large gathering at one time. The Bark Park was determined to need repairs and when the Master Plan for Commissioners Park was being developed, the need for relocation was established. Another consideration was the current Bark Park can remain in place while the relocation is being done this fall. There is no agreement in place with FPD for the use of the Michele Bingham Park specifically for soccer. Some of the studies that were FOIA requested are not required to be done for this type of project and they are very costly as well. A concession to move the fence fifty feet out from the residents' yards from thirty feet has been recommended. There is currently a permit from the Village and a contract has been agreed to. Discussion of the need for a dog park at all was held, but Operation Playground has established it so the thought was not eliminating an amenity. It also requires ongoing maintenance and ongoing expense. A Dog Park serves the community just like playgrounds and ball fields. More landscaping could be incorporated into the design after it is done. A pause in the start date was proposed to consider the residents' concerns and perhaps screening one side of the new fence. Gina will check to see if there is a penalty to pause the start, send an email update to the residents and keep the commissioners informed.

IV. Budget/Finance –

V. Recreation –

VI. Miscellaneous –

- Gina told the Board that during the recent storms, trees fell on two cars. One of the owners is an instructor at the Founders Center and the other was in the building. She told them insurance would not reimburse them and suggested that the Board agree to pay for their deductible. Discussion was held. The general consensus was that the Board would agree to pay $500 each .
- April 2027 Elections – Gina informed the Board members that Tom Barz would run for one of the two seats and that Elmer Gentry will not be running. Staff has had discussions regarding qualified candidates. Commissioner Ruvoli said he was saddened that Elmer would not be able to run again and will miss his input. Commissioner Ponton also told Commissioner Gentry that he will be missed. Petitions will be available to pick up November 16-23 and must return the completed forms in mid-December.

VII. Executive Session – None

VIII. Adjournment – With nothing further to discuss, President McCarey asked for a motion to adjourn the Committee Meeting. ***Commissioner Gentry so moved, and Commissioner Ponton seconded the motion. Hearing no objections all present voted Aye. Motion passed by a voice vote at 8:30 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Mary T. Strand
Board Minutes Secretary