

Minutes
Bloomington Park District
Board of Commissioners SPECIAL Meeting
January 23, 2023, 6:00 P.M.
Johnston Recreation Center

Meeting Called to Order

President Burke called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Jerry Marshall, Buzz Puccio, Gerace Olson, Frank Saverino, and Andre Burke and staff member Jackie Tithof Steere.

Recognition of Visitors

The Board recognized Dr. Laura Payne, Professor and Director of the University of Illinois (U-I) Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR) and Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism and master's program student Tianyuan (Jamed) Dou. Both were present to conduct a focus group among members the Board.

New Business

Focus Group for Community Survey Development

U-I's Dr. Payne facilitated a sharing of viewpoints meant ultimately to create a community survey that would allow the very successful agency to understand current and future community preferences and continue to grow and evolve.

The following items were determined to be done well by the Park District: Preschool, Before and After School Care, staff engagement (resourceful, family-like, empowered), efficiency, partnerships with other entities for special events, Oasis programming, athletic opportunities for all skill levels, proactive approaches, open space, finding potential new activities, and change (of command, staff turnover, and transitions).

Opportunities to pursue included pickleball; more events for non-sports related (arts/theatre); additional corporate sponsorship; maintenance of current staff; marketing to compete with all-day kindergarten; continuing to evolve the before and after care programs, market to relevant media, and expand adult courses; additional funding such as grant funding; and keeping the organizational culture such that current employees are happy and like their jobs.

Thinking into the future, the group would like the agency to have a reputation for serving the community well, employing sharp employees who foster great experiences and take pride in it, having a Board that remains doing good for most people, maintaining autonomy by being the go-to in recreation for the community, and possibly a new logo.

Challenges identified by the group included planning for the unknown, building a foundational group up as influencers to Board, being seen as a value at the state level, funding, being seen as the front line on health and wellness, getting the next generation involved in volunteering, increased competition, serving an aging population, fewer

children, single-issue board members, maintenance of facilities, and being debt and land strapped.

U-I faculty confirmed the next steps in the survey process. The input from the focus group would be summarized into a report and issued to the Executive Director and certain staff.

Adjournment

Commissioner Marshall moved, seconded by Commissioner Puccio, to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. On roll call vote the motion was approved 5-0.

Aye: Marshall, Puccio, Olson, Saverino, Burke

Nay: None

Absent: None

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Tithof Steere
Board Assistant Secretary