

illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



going green

PLUS: The Legislative Platform, Soaring to New Heights Conference Awards
& Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest Winners



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FROM THE EDITOR

RED EARED SLIDER TURTLE



This is one of the most exciting issues of the year! It is packed with great stories, award winners of all kinds and the ever-popular *Legislative Platform*. Not to mention, the feature requested by many of our members – ‘Going Green.’

I know I am a bit biased, but when I think of the color green, I am reminded of the agency for which I am proud to serve, the IAPD. After all, green is the color of our logo! The Illinois Association of Park Districts conducts Statewide research on behalf of its membership, provides legal and legislative support to our members, publishes essential books and offers an excellent line-up of educational services and networking events. All these resources are designed to help member agencies run smoothly and improve to meet current needs. We are at the heart of helping others achieve sustainability so you can see the ‘Going Green’ issue is one of my personal favorites!



NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

I caught up with Cassie Carroll, Co-Founder of the Illinois Green Business Association last week and she was kind enough to share some great information and resources for those looking to go green. I hope you enjoy her article on page 18.

The topic of ‘going green’ also reminds me of reptiles and amphibians, so I thought I would share a few images with you of some of the beautiful green creatures found right here in Illinois. These images take me back in time when I used to catch as many frogs as I could as a child. They also remind me of some of my dear friends



GREEN TREEFROG

Trisha, Violeta, Shane, Tony, Shannon, Shari and so many more who also love and keep these ‘green’ animals. See? It IS easy being green!

I hope you enjoy this issue on what it really means to ‘go green’ and have a fantastic spring!

Warm regards,

Rachel Laier

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Peter M. Murphy, J.D., CAE
IAPD President and CEO

Roll out the Welcome Mat

Odd numbered years usher in the season of park board elections and many agencies will be welcoming new members to their boards. Helping these new members hit the ground running is the key to the continuity of good governance.

The first step should be to take the time to walk each new board member through the information which forms the basis of your organization. I would suggest that you first share those “need to know” documents which command your board's closest attention.

Share the **bylaws** that clarify the big picture for the board, including its main policies and organizational structure.

Explain how your **individual policies** paraphrase a law, explain a procedure, clarify a principle, or interpret a particular bylaw. They are the protocol to follow and help eliminate embarrassing situations, improper behavior and ineffective decision making. A park district usually has board related policies as well as personnel, and financial policies, and while the chief executive is responsible for personnel and office procedures, the board should ensure that they are reviewed and adequate to meet the needs of the district.

Job descriptions for board members and the chief executive save the board from a multitude of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Listing the expectations for individual board members and officers is a reminder for current and new members of their role and responsibilities. Committee descriptions define what these groups are expected to accomplish as defined by the full board and help keep the committee work on track.

Explain how **agendas** for board meetings, retreats or committee meetings help keep the board focused on issues that belong to it, rather than on operational matters. Board meeting agendas guide the board's official business when its members get together to make governance decisions.

Meeting minutes are proof that the agenda got accomplished. They record what occurred in your meeting. Each board member needs to read the draft and approve the contents at the next meeting. Be sure to explain the executive session procedure and process, and how minutes that relate to it are reviewed.

Your **board manual** is the compilation of documents that new and current board members use to refresh their memory or to learn how to fit into your board culture. No law demands that you have a manual, but it is a good practice as it provides your members with easy access to your documents. Making your manual available electronically is a great option for the emerging use of tablets by board members.

For a quick start, review:

- The agency's history
- The district's organizational chart
- The meeting minutes from the past year
- The past six months financial reports
- Last year's annual audit; and
- The board policy manual

On the laws affecting board service, review initially and annually thereafter:

- The Open Meetings Act
- The Public Officials Prohibited Activities Act
- Rules regarding Incompatibility of Office
- The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for its impact on board communications
- Law governing interference with public contracting
- Time off for official meetings; and
- The Truth in Taxation Act

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

– Henry Ford



Provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the board members' fiduciary responsibilities including ways they can avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions of conflicts of interest?
- What are the board members' responsibilities regarding meetings (before, during and after)?
- What are the board members' responsibilities regarding relationships with staff?
- How does the board expect members to interact with the public during meetings, agency events or in general?
- What other general expectations does the board have of members?

I have found that it is helpful to use examples with the answers to each of these questions. For a new board member, it provides context for them about the agency.

Share the **Board Member Code of Ethics** which can be found on the back of their new IAPD membership card as follows.

As a member of the board, I will:

- Represent the interests of all people in the community. I will not favor any particular special interests.
- Not use my service on this board for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends or supporters.
- Keep privileged information confidential.
- Approach all board issues with an open mind, prepared to make the best decisions for everyone involved.
- Do nothing to violate the trust of those who elected or appointed me to the board or of those we serve.
- Focus on my efforts on the mission of the agency and not on my personal goals.
- Never exercise authority as a board member except when acting in a meeting with the full board or as I am delegated by the board.

Finally, it is important to have a conversation about the board's culture so that new board members have an understanding of the expectations that the board will have of them as well as the expectations they should have of the board. Every board has a unique culture and it is advantageous to good board governance that this culture be shared as quickly as possible.

Many times, new board members may be surprised to learn that they have no individual authority. Even though they have individual responsibilities and legal duties, unlike other boards they may be familiar with, pointing out that authority is vested in the board as a body is important to emphasize when rolling out the welcome mat.

A well thought out and effective onboarding process will make for a smooth transaction for your district. For more ideas on this and other good governance topics, visit the IAPD website at ILparks.org. Don't miss the opportunity to expose new and seasoned board members to IAPD's content rich Commissioner Boot Camps. They are offered regionally at the following times and locations:

Saturday, May 20, 2017

IAPD Boot Camp #1

Huntley Park District's Recreation Center
12015 Mill Street, Huntley, IL 60142 847-669-3180
Registration from 9-9:30am and boot camp from 9:30am-Noon

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

IAPD Boot Camp #2

Metro East Park and Recreation District's Trailhead and Office
104 United Drive, Collinsville, IL 62234 618-346-4905
Registration from 6-6:30pm and boot camp from 6:30-9pm

Thursday, May 25, 2017

IAPD Boot Camp #3

Normal Parks and Recreation Department's Community Activity Center
1110 Douglas Street, Normal, IL 61761 309-454-9639
Registration from 6-6:30pm and boot camp from 6:30-9pm

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

IAPD Boot Camp #4

Bolingbrook Park District's Boughton Ridge Golf Course
335 E. Boughton Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440 630-739-4100
Thursday, June 1, 2017
Registration from 6-6:30pm and boot camp from 6:30-9pm

Thursday, June 1, 2017

IAPD Boot Camp #5

Schaumburg Park District's Schaumburg Golf Club
401 N. Roselle Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194 847-885-9000
Registration from 6-6:30pm and boot camp from 6:30-9pm

2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

April-May

Flying 4 Kids Months
Statewide Kite Fly

May 2

Parks Day at the Capitol
State Capitol, Springfield

May 2

Legislative Reception
Illini Country Club,
Springfield

May 3

Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza, Springfield

Aug 19

Park District Conservation
Day
State Fairgrounds, Springfield

Aug 26

Legislative Awareness Picnic
Joliet Park District &
Wheeling Park District

Sept 26-28

NRPA Congress & Exposition
New Orleans, Louisiana

Oct 13

IAPD Best of the Best
Awards Gala
Chevy Chase Country Club
Wheeling Park District

Nov 9

Legal Symposium
McDonald's University, Oak
Brook

Jan 18-20, 2018

IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New
Heights Conference Hilton
Chicago

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFASTS

Mar 3

Village of Hawthorn Woods

Mar 4

Schaumburg Park District

Mar 6

Tinley Park Park District

Mar 10

Carol Stream Park District

Mar 13

Urbana Park District

Mar 20

Rockford Park District

Mar 24

Decatur Park District

NETWORKING AND EDUCATION

May 16

Summer Golf
Tour/Educational Event #1
Arrowhead Golf Club
Wheaton Park District

June 12

Summer Golf
Tour/Educational Event #2
Aldeen Golf Club Rockford
Park District

July 13

IAPD Leadership Classic
White Pines Golf Club
Bensenville Park District

Aug 28

Summer Golf
Tour/Educational Event #3
GolfVisions Mgt. Inc. Tanna
Farms Golf Club, Geneva

Sept 11 Summer Golf

Tour/Educational Event #4
Prairie Bluff Public Golf
Club Lockport Township
Park District

IAPD
Illinois Association of Park Districts



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

100th General Assembly Underway with Thousands of Bills Introduced

As this issue goes to press, the State is entering its 21st month without a comprehensive state budget. While the budget impasse continues to garner most of the media and public attention, other legislative activity in the 100th General Assembly is in full swing with more than 6,000 bills having been introduced since January.

IAPD has spent many hours reviewing the details of each of these bills for potential impact on park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies, and we are closely tracking more than 350 bills that affect member agencies. Throughout the spring session, we will also be reviewing hundreds of amendments to these bills and updating the bill tracking list.

While it is still too early in the Spring Session to know which bills will have the support to move forward, below are just a few of many examples of legislation that IAPD is closely tracking along with numerous other bills that would freeze local property taxes and increase the minimum wage. IAPD members may visit the Public Policy webpage at ILparks.org for a complete list and status of all priority bills. As always, you can count on IAPD to keep you updated through timely Legislative Updates and Alerts.

IAPD Platform Bills

The following bills have been introduced as part of the IAPD Legislative Platform for the 100th General Assembly.

HB 3120 (Demmer, T.) / SB 1856 (Bivins, T.) would allow public bodies to provide electronic access to the Department of Labor's uniform prevailing wage schedule in lieu of the annual newspaper notice associated with the adoption of every district's prevailing wage ordinance.

HB 776 (Andersson, S.) / SB 1370 (McConnaughay, K.) will ensure that the terms of park commissioners remain staggered in instances where the size of park boards are reduced from 7 to 5 members.

HB 2440 (Manley, N.) / SB 908 (Bush, M.) clarify the ability of park districts to enter into licensing and management agreements related to the operation of park district facilities.

Other Amendments to the Park District Code

HB 786 (Andrade, J., Jr.) would amend the Park District Code to require certain park district volunteers to complete an application prior to volunteering, which discloses that the volunteer has not been convicted of a sex offense. The requirement would only apply to volunteers who report to, and are under the direct supervision of, a park district's administrative staff and who provide personal services to a park district recreational program offered to children. A current volunteer who is convicted of a sex offense would be obligated to immediately disclose a conviction to the park district and resign or face penalties for failing to disclose his or her sex offender status.

HB 725 (Jones, T.) proposes to limit all park board members to two full terms in office.

HB 3497 (Jones, T.) would prohibit park districts from charging their residents user fees, except for summer programs.

SB 953 (Connelly, M.) would define "compensation" that is prohibited for park commissioners pursuant to the Park District Code as any salary or other benefit not expressly authorized by the Code that is provided to, paid to, or paid on behalf of current or retired board members and their families. **SB 954 (Connelly, M.)** contains similar changes for trustees of library boards.

Open Meetings Act

The following bills propose changes to the Open Meetings Act.

HB 3326 (Ives, J.) / SB 1263 (Connelly, M.) specifies that any person shall have the opportunity to address public officials with comments or questions at all open meetings, subject to reasonable constraints, and further provides that any answers to questions asked during the open meeting must be provided by the public body within 45 days.

HB 3626 (Andersson, S.) provides that any person seeking to address public officials in an open meeting shall be allowed to do so at least once per meeting, and any rule limiting a person to speaking no more than once in a given number of days shall be void. Although a public body may continue to reasonably limit the amount of time given to a person to address public officials during an open meeting, the legislation provides that the rules may not require persons seeking to address public officials to do anything more than state his or her name for the record.

SB 1227 (Tracy, J.) would allow a public body to hold closed meetings for issues involving communications with its attorney or auditor that would not be subject to discovery in litigation.

FOIA

HB 766 (Andersson, S.) would remove executable programs or source codes used to store and access electronic data processing records or other electronic communications from the definition of "public records" under FOIA, meaning that public bodies would not be required to furnish the executable programs or source codes required to access the information.

SB 1977 (Haine, W.) provides that all records of a public body, and not just those that are in its custody or possession, are presumed to be open to inspection or copying under FOIA and makes changes to the definition of "public records".

Public Officers Prohibited Activities Act

HB 684 (Yingling, S.) would codify principles of current ethics laws and local ordinances by prohibiting units of local government and their public officials from using public resources or public funds to obstruct, fight, or challenge initiatives to consolidate, merge, or eliminate any unit of local government and would require state moneys to be withheld from the unit of local government until the obstruction, fighting, or challenge is concluded.

HB 3384 (Ives, J.) provides that a public officer's direct or indirect financial interest in a contract or work to be done is not removed by an abstention or present vote and that such an abstention is considered a vote that carries with the majority.

HB 3758 (Yingling, S.) prohibits an elected officer of a unit of local government from authorizing an employment contract (except for labor union contracts) that would extend past the expiration of his or her elected term and prohibits a governing body from approving a contract beyond the term of an elected officer of the governing body whose term expires last.

Local Government Disclosures

HB 537 (Pritchard, R.) would require specific ballot disclosures in referendum that seek to impose or increase a retailers' occupation tax, a use tax, a service occupation tax, a service use tax, or a property tax, or regarding the issuance of bonds and further provides that such referenda may only appear on ballots once every 23 months.

While not identical, **HB 290 (Olsen, D.)**, **HB 442 (Ives, J.)** and **HB 3323 (Ives, J.)** are unfunded mandates that are similar to bills that have passed the House in recent years and would generally require units of local government to maintain an Internet website with nearly a dozen categories of information and to preserve these records online in perpetuity. Each local government would also be required to create and maintain searchable expenditure and revenue information and update financial data at least **monthly**. An automated Rich Site Summary (RSS) feed must also be created to notify subscribers of updates to the posted information.

Local Government Consolidation

SB 3 (Cullerton, T.) contains a number of recommendations from the Lt. Governor's Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Task Force, including the expansion of county board authority to unilaterally dissolve units of local government with appointed board members to all 102 counties (currently, DuPage, Lake, and McHenry only). The bill also contains a number of provisions related to the consolidation, merger and dissolution of certain townships, drainage districts and smaller road districts. **HB 792 (Demmer, T.) / HB 3135 (Yingling, S.)** contain the language expanding the dissolution procedures for county boards to all 102 counties.

HB 347 (McSweeney, D.) would allow 5% of voters in the preceding general election to initiate a referendum to dissolve any unit of local government and transfer its property and other assets to any other unit of government. The unit of local government would be dissolved if the referendum was approved by either (1) a majority of those voting in the election, or (2) three-fifths of those voting on the specific question.

Local Records Act

HB 2385 (Breen, P.) would require an agency that provides an email address to one or more of its staff members, employees, or contractors to provide an email address for all officers of the agency and requires these individuals to use this agency-provided email for all communications in connection with the transaction of public business. The bill further requires all staff members, employees, contractors, and officers to promptly forward, print, or otherwise provide any email sent

or received on his or her personal email address to his or her agency if the email is in connection with the transaction of public business and provides that all such emails are public records regardless if the emails are sent or received on a personal or agency-provided email address.

HB 3329 (Ives, J.) would require all local records, including legal records and emails, to be retained for a minimum of 7 years. The bill would require every public employee, without exception, to receive record retention training to comply with the Local Records Act.

SB 59 (Althoff, P.) provides that if an officer or agency submits a Local Records Disposal Certificate to the Local Records Commission and no objection to the Certificate has been received by the Local Records Commission within 30 days, then the officer or agency may dispose of the records listed on the certificate without the Local Records Commission review or approval.

Prevailing Wage Act

HB 2493 (Hoffman, J.) is similar to **HB 924 (Hoffman, J. / Harmon, D.)** from the 98th General Assembly and would require bidders on local government contracts to meet the "responsible bidder" standards under the Illinois Procurement Code, including a requirement to participate in a training / apprenticeship program.

HB 2495 (Hoffman, J.) is a reintroduction of **SB 2964 (Harmon, D. / Hoffman, J.)** from the 99th General Assembly, which was vetoed by the Governor last year, and would require, among other things, that the prevailing wage be not less than the prevailing rate for similar work performed under collective bargaining agreements in the locality if the agreements cover at least 30% of the workers.

HB 3044 (Hoffman, J.) / SB 1904 (Silverstein, I) would require the Department of Labor to publish on its official website by July 15 of each year, a prevailing wage schedule for each county in the State based upon the prevailing rate of wages investigated and ascertained by the Department during the month of June.

HB 3101 (Stewart, B.) would exempt projects \$20,000 or less from the Prevailing Wage Act for public works if the public body notifies the Department of Labor of each project for which the waiver is used within 60 days of commencing the project. **SB 1360 (Rooney, T.)** would similarly exempt public works projects with an estimated project cost of \$1,000,000 or less while **SB 1359 (Rooney, T.)** proposes to repeal the Prevailing Wage Act altogether.

Other

HB 2681 (Sente, C.) would raise the exemption threshold under the Local Government Professional Services Selection Act for the selection of architectural, engineering, or land surveying services from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

HB 3221 (Evans, M., Jr.) would amend the Smoke Free Illinois Act to prohibit persons from smoking within 15 feet of any entrance to an enclosed or partially enclosed youth sporting event where all players are under the age of 18 and the event is sponsored and supervised by a public body or a not-for-profit entity and within 250 feet of the field of play, including areas for spectators and participants, at a youth sporting event held in an outdoor setting.

HB 3771 (Soto, C.) creates the Defibrillator at Sporting Events Access Act and would require a unit of local government to ensure, through a permitting process or otherwise, that an automated external defibrillator is available for organized marathons, races, and sporting events within the jurisdiction of the unit of local government and is easily accessible for use by participants and spectators at the marathon, race, or sporting event.

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

A CLOSER LOOK AT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN THE PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSION



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE
IPRA Executive Director

IPRA Continues to Evolve

A year ago, I was able to stand in front of you and share that IPRA was growing, healthy, and strong. I told you that we were financially healthy and able to invest in new programs which better serve our members, I shared that both student and professional member numbers were the highest they had been in years, and that member satisfaction was at an all-time high. Can you imagine how lucky I feel to be able to share with you today that in all those benchmarks, we're doing even better now? Member satisfaction has increased from 95% to 97% satisfied, with those members saying they were "extremely satisfied" climbing from 14% two years ago to 21% last year, to 27% this year.

Our membership continues to grow in size. Since 2011, six years ago, we have experienced a net growth of about 500 members, about half of that growth being in professional members and the other half in student members.

While we have grown, we have added more and more ways to serve you. Our Unplug Illinois campaign has connected researchers all over the state with the agencies who see the public every day so that we can bridge the gap and better tell our story about why the work we do in parks and recreation has positive effects on everyone in Illinois. Our campaign will continue to build as we roll out our new public service announcement video about the value of parks and recreation.

Our ProConnect mentoring program has received national attention. Over the past year, I have shared with other associations all over the country, about this unique mentoring program to support you at every stage of your career. ProConnect's Regents met with a mentoring expert who literally wrote the text book on designing mentoring programs and not only did she say we were doing everything right, she wants to feature our case study in her next book! IPRA has been featured in national publications three times because of this nationally award winning program. Within ProConnect, participants find value in their relationships with their mentors and mentees and they have experienced proven results in their careers. In a recent survey, 100% of current participants said they would recommend this program to a friend or colleague.

As IPRA has grown, we have been the beneficiaries of the support of hundreds of volunteers who have given their time and energy to this professional community. In a study completed this summer, IPRA was able, maybe for the first time, to compile a comprehensive list of all of our committees. Ultimately, we have 91 committees. This proves beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we absolutely could not do what we do without you. We are, however, trying to make it easier for you to engage with us. The board and I have been focused on streamlining those committees. In 2017, we hope to create more standardization and be able to better direct new people to these important leadership volunteer positions.

IPRA's staff continued our own professional development this year too. Barry, our CFO, represented us as the Treasurer of the American Camp Association of Illinois. Sheila and Heather attended a conference on marketing and membership. Jessica took classes in graphic design. Leesa attended a conference on meeting planning technology. Matt represented us on the NRPA committee related to the CPRP exam and

Matt received the "Forty Under 40" award this year from Association Forum. Further, we have grown the staff with the addition of Duane Smith, our new Education and Events Coordinator. Duane is a CPRP who comes to us from ten years of service with the Mokena Park District. To each of them on the IPRA team, I want to again thank you for all that you do. I have the utmost confidence in each and every one of you.

As we have grown, so too has our foundation. As you have heard from Mike Clark, we have had great successes this year with the foundation. This has included partnerships with the sections, Playcore, the Wilson Family, and next year the Western Golf Association.

I want to again thank the members of the 2016 IPRA Board of Directors. It is a huge commitment to serve on the IPRA board. This year we met in O'Fallon, Vernon Hills, Champaign, Oregon, and Collinsville. I have greatly enjoyed working with each of you. Mary Jeanne, I always smile at your direct approach and the way you just "tell it like it is". It has been a real joy getting to know you better.

In summary, IPRA is healthy and strong. Finances are strong, membership is growing, and our quality programs are expanding. We are gaining national recognition as an association who is innovative. Our staff are being recognized in the field. Our member satisfaction ratings are climbing. It is truly an incredible time to be together, with you as volunteers and leaders, with the staff who are committed to you, with the board who give their energy for you, and with our partners who, like us, want to see Illinois as the best place for parks and recreation in the nation. We've had a great year and I look forward to all we plan to accomplish in 2017 as we Learn, Connect, and Inspire together!

The following is a list of all IPRA award winners at conference 2017.

2017 Annual Conference Awards: IPRA Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement Award: Tim Dimke, Rockford Park District, IPRA Professional of the Year Award: Lisa Sheppard, Glencoe Park District, IPRA Young Professional Award: Liz Serruto, Bloomingdale Park District, IPRA Advocacy Award: Goldman Sachs Team, and IPRA Community Impact Award: Mike Trigg, Waukegan Park District.

Chairman Awards presented by 2016 Chair Mary Jeanne Hutchison: John Wilson, retired; Rob Sperl, Wheaton Park District; Allison Niemela, Batavia Park District; Greg Bruggeman, Elgin Parks & Recreation; Andrew Dallner, O'Fallon Parks and Recreation Department; and the 2016 IPRA Membership Council: Carlo Capalbo, Plainfield Park District; Kari Felkamp, Batavia Park District; Keith Wallace, Lincolnway Special Recreation Association; Jackie Gonzalez, Park Ridge Park District; Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District; Conor Cahill, Berwyn Park District; and Matt Corso, SEASPAR

Joint Distinguished Accredited Agency: Bartlett Park District, Geneva Park District, Gurnee Park District, Hoffman Estates Park District, Lake Bluff Park District, Lockport Township Park District, Morton Grove Park District, Northwest Special Recreation Association, and Waukegan Park District.

Outstanding Facility & Parks Award: Division II: Park: Rockford Park District: Mercyhealth Sportscore Two Outdoor Expansion; Renovation: Schaumburg Park District: Community Recreation Center; Multiple Use: Chicago Park District: Morgan Park Sports Center; and Specific Use: Glenview Park District: Park & Facility Services East Maintenance Building.

Outstanding Program or Special Event Award: Division I: Ongoing program: Village of Lincolnwood: Community Park Playdates; and Division II: Special event: Oak Lawn Park District: Monarch Festival; Special event: NSSRA: Camp Wigwam.

IPRA Outstanding Sustainability / Conservation Award: Division I: Environmental Education: Urbana Park District: Douglas Creek Restoration Project.

Exceptional Workplace Awards: Addison Park District, Lockport Township Park District, Plainfield Park District, and Village of Lake in the Hills.

2016 Section Award Winners: a) Administration and Finance Section: Professional of the Year Award: Tim Reinbold, Warrenville Park District; b) Communication and Marketing Section: Rising Star Award: Katie Drum, Batavia Park District; Vision Award: Diane Hardy, Skokie Park District; c) Facility Management Section: Professional of the Year Award: Greg Bruggeman, Elgin Parks & Recreation, Rising Star Award: Erin Chapa, Addison Park District; d) Recreation Section: Professional of the Year Award: Erica Strojinc, Buffalo Grove Park District, Rising Star Award: Mary Liz Jayne, Lisle Park District, and Marcy Adams Spirit Award: Patricia Mitchell, River Trails Park District; and e) Therapeutic Recreation Section: Professional of the Year Award: Mel Robson, NSSRA; Rising Star Award: Erin White, WDSRA.

2016 Professional Scholarship Recipients (received throughout 2016): Katherine Hassert, Keith Jones, Lauren Kabrick, Matt LaPorte, Megann Panek, Erik Rivera, Karyn Roth, Joe Smith, and Eric Lee Wilson.

2017 Student Scholarship Recipients: Illinois State University: Amber Scarbeary, Chicago State University: Candise Green, Moraine Valley Community College: Joseph Johnson & Marina Uher, Southern Illinois University: Nicolette Hoesman & Steve Riedinger, and University of Illinois: Leslie Camarillo, Lynn Kincaid, Maggie Phan, Mitchell Fransen, & Taylor Krawczyk.

Agency Showcase: People's Choice Award: Lombard Park District, Overall Agency Showcase 1st Place: Lombard Park District, Overall Agency Showcase 2nd Place: Champaign Park District, Overall Agency Showcase 3rd Place: Gurnee Park District, Brochure Series: Batavia Park District, Electronic Communication: Winnetka Park District, Integrated Photography: Forest Preserve District of Kane County, Showcase Display: Lombard Park District, Large Format Marketing: Lombard Park District, Logo Design: Champaign Park District & Oswegoland Park District, Marketing Campaign: Village of Orland Park, Media Campaign: Gurnee Park District, Print Communication: McHenry County Conservation District, Social Media Campaign: SEASPAR, Website: Homewood Flossmoor Park District, Promotional Item: Joliet Park District, and Paid Advertisement: Champaign Park District.

Playground Grant Recipients: Alton Parks and Recreation, Bartlett Park District, Bolingbrook Park District, City of Galesburg, City of Pontiac Parks and Recreation, Crystal Lake Park District, DeKalb Park District, Naperville Park District, Oak Lawn Park District, Oregon Park District, Palatine Park District, Plainfield Park District, Pleasant Dale Park District, Schaumburg Park District, Tinley Park Park District, Village of Hawthorne Woods Parks and Recreation, Village of Lake in the Hills Parks and Recreation Department, and Wheeling Park District.

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members: Molly Hamer and Rick Hanetho.

Finance Committee Service: Marla DeCicco, Vernon Hills Park District.

Staff Longevity: 15 Years of Service: Heather Weishaar, IPRA Outreach Director.

Upcoming Events

April 7, 2017
Supervisor Symposium
Bartlett Community Center,
700 S Bartlett Road, Bartlett IL
Registration Deadline: April 4th

Providing professionals in the recreation field a curriculum that builds a strong foundation of basic skills needed to obtain a supervisory position. Sessions provide opportunities to increase knowledge, which can be implemented immediately and expose participants to emerging trends that can help advance their career in the recreation field.

April 12 & 20, 2017
Skills Development Webinar Series:
Leadership and Organizational Behavior
Webinar

By reflecting on your own individual qualities you'll explore the difference between leadership and management. Using a real-world case study

we'll walk through the process and explore successful organizational behaviors at work.

May 4, 2017
11th Annual Park Pursuit
Park Ridge, IL
Registration Deadline: April 21

Modeled after the Amazing Race, Park Pursuit allows members of IPRA to engage in a day long race where team building, healthy competition and recreation take center stage. Participants are challenged physically and mentally as they race through the streets of Park Ridge. Clue cards direct teams to various parks and landmarks where tasks are performed.

May 10 & 18, 2017
Skills Development Webinar Series: Alternative Funding and Partnership - Dollars that Make Sense
Webinar

For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at ILipra.org

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at 800-748-0554.





2017
IAPD/IPRA
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CONFERENCE AWARDS

IAPD LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR



Senator Donne Trotter, Assistant Majority Leader

For nearly 30 years, Senator Donne Trotter has been a dedicated and reliable supporter of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and its member agencies. He holds several key positions in the senate, and throughout the years we have counted on his leadership and support in helping to pass numerous IAPD platform initiatives. As chair of the senate appropriations committee, he has been critical to our efforts to protect the integrity of the OSLAD grant program from special fund sweeps. His dedication and service to IAPD initiatives is remarkable.



Representative Steve Andersson

As an experienced attorney representing local governments, Representative Andersson has a unique understanding of the issues IAPD member agencies face. He is a strong proponent of local control and a reliable voice in the fight against unfunded mandates. Representative Andersson consistently attends IAPD legislative awareness events, and his efforts to advance park and recreational opportunities for Illinois citizens in his first term have truly been exceptional.



Representative Larry Walsh, Jr.

Since joining the Illinois House of Representatives in 2012, Representative Larry Walsh, Jr. has been one of IAPD's greatest allies. He has been a strong voice on local government issues, particularly those that affect park districts and forest preserves. This past year, he sponsored House Bill 4536, which adjusted the bid limit threshold under the Park District Code, Conservation District Act and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act. Representative Walsh has been a tremendous advocate for IAPD.

IAPD Honored Professional Award **Tim Dimke, Rockford Park District**

Tim Dimke has a distinguished 44-year career with the Rockford Park District. His hard work ethic led him to a variety of leadership positions, and eventually, Executive Director. Tim encourages the board and staff to continually strive for the next level of excellence. Tim is credited with the development of many recreational facilities including Carlson Ice Arena, Aldeen Golf Club and Sportscore Two. His personal values have made him a natural leader and have served him well in his career.



IAPD Rising Star Award

Matt Walsh, Park District of Forest Park

The volunteer spirit can be contagious, and Matt Walsh certainly caught it! He followed in his father's footsteps, volunteering to coach a youth soccer team every Saturday for six weeks during the spring and fall. Matt has grown to be an impeccable advocate for the park district. Matt's dedicated involvement and perspective on the millennial generation, combined with the love he holds for his hometown, shine through in his desire to provide public service that benefits all citizens.



IPRA Advocacy Award

Goldman Sachs

This year's Advocacy Award goes to a team of volunteers that has provided numerous hours and much financial support to the volunteer service section of the Forest Preserve District of Will County. Known to the district as Prairie People Volunteers, this team of global finance professionals has maintained gardens, trails and facilities that benefit the citizens of Will County.

IPRA Professional Award

Liz Serruto, Bloomingdale Park District

Liz Serruto currently serves as recreation supervisor for the Bloomingdale Park District. A Certified Park and Recreation Professional, she is a graduate of IPRA's professional level of the Leadership Academy, an active member of the IPRA Early Childhood and Teen Committees, and she is currently the co-chair of IPRA's supervisor symposium committee. Liz continually strives to enhance programs and services for participants to give them positive, memorable and outstanding experiences.



**IAPD Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service Award
Penny Randel, Northbrook Park District**

Penny has helped to guide the Northbrook Park District through many successful endeavors. She worked to secure grant funding to develop the Trail Through Time and the 60-acre Techny Prairie Park and Fields; and her dedicated efforts resulted in two new neighborhood parks. Penny's contagious smile is found at numerous park district events. Her community service extends far beyond the park district, giving generously of her time to many. Penny exemplifies the passion, commitment and service that represents the collective best in us all.



**IPRA Community Impact Award
Mike Trigg, Waukegan Park District**

Mike Trigg serves as Superintendent of Parks for the Waukegan Park District. He is a member of the IPRA Parks and Natural Resources Management Section and is active on the Environmental Subcommittee. Mike is a graduate of the NRPA's Green School. His work has led to a carbon management and sustainability plan, part of the Waukegan Park District's strategic plan. His on-going leadership, commitment to excellence and passion for sustainability continues to impact individuals, the Waukegan community and his profession.

**IAPD Commissioner of the Year Award
Dave Johnson, Schaumburg Park District**

Since becoming a Schaumburg resident in 1968, Dave Johnson has been a visionary leader in parks and recreation and an advocate for quality fitness and leisure opportunities. His legacy is his foresight in preservation of open space within the suburban landscape and the protection of natural surroundings for future generations. Dave has served a remarkable 43 years on the Schaumburg Park District Board, propelling the park district through a time of significant growth and development.



**IPRA Professional of the Year Award
Lisa Sheppard, Glencoe Park District**

Lisa is the Executive Director of the Glencoe Park District and she is passionate about her work. Throughout her career, she has been very active in IPRA and has held many leadership positions. She is a life-long learner and is always asking questions, which has helped her grow throughout her career. As a leader in every sense of the word, her vision, integrity and ability to build outstanding teams has earned her the respect of her staff and colleagues.



PASSING THE GAVEL



IPRA Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement Award Tim Dimke, Rockford Park District

Tim Dimke has a distinguished four-decade career in parks and recreation that has led to a variety of leadership positions. Under his current leadership position as the Executive Director, the Rockford Park District has twice been awarded the prestigious National Gold Medal Award for excellence in park and recreation management, and twice earned Distinguished Agency Accreditation. His life goal is to continue to see the Rockford Park District serving its citizens and be a shining example of progressive, creative and problem-solving government.

Winners of the Distinguished Accredited Agency Award:

- Bartlett Park District
- Geneva Park District
- Gurnee Park District
- Hoffman Estates Park District
- Lake Bluff Park District
- Lockport Township Park District
- Morton Grove Park District
- Northwest Special Recreation Association
- Waukegan Park District



2017 Chairman of the IAPD Board of Trustees – Tom Barz, Frankfort Park District

Tom has been a Commissioner of the Frankfort Park District since 1999 and currently serves as President. Throughout the years, he has worked with the park board to obtain more than \$2 million from grants and the OSLAD program. Tom negotiated with new developers to acquire more than 150

additional acres for the district. He helped start the Main Street program and BETA Team in the Frankfort historic district, serving as President for two years. Tom has served on various committees in village government and has worked closely with the Mayor and trustees to improve recreational opportunities and open lands for village residents. Tom's passion is the outdoors, which is displayed in the more than 35 years of involvement with Ducks Unlimited. He currently serves on the Ambassadors, Board Development, Executive, Honors and Resolutions, Membership and Program Committees; as well as the Joint Conference Committee and Joint Coordinating Council. Tom succeeds Ken Collin, commissioner of the Freeport Park District.

2017 Chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors – Rita Fletcher, Bartlett Park District



Rita Fletcher has more than 25 years of experience in the field of parks and recreation and is currently the Executive Director of the Bartlett Park District. Since taking over as Executive Director in 2005, the District has received more than \$1.4 million dollars in grants, is a two-time NRPA Gold Medal finalist, and successfully passed an \$18 million dollar referendum.

Rita has also served on both the IPRA Certification Board and the Facility Management Board. Locally, Rita has been a member of the Bartlett Rotary for 10 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Parks & Recreation Administration from Eastern Illinois University and a Master's Degree from Aurora University, and is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional.

Rita succeeds Mary Jeanne Hutchison, Executive Director of the O'Fallon Park District.



Positioning Sustainability Initiatives to Get the **‘GREEN LIGHT’**

By **Cassie Carroll**,
Co-Founder of the Illinois
Green Business Association

Millions of Illinois residents visit parks, recreation areas and public facilities yearly for many different reasons, creating lifelong memories, as well as improving their overall quality of life. Since park agency missions focus on enhancing the community's quality of life and value innovation and stewardship, sustainability initiatives and projects can be a key tool to their success.

These efforts not only meet the mission and vision of park agencies, but lead the way in green innovation for all Illinois communities.

Understanding your current operational practices and benchmarking your utility use is extremely important to justify the economic and environmental need for your sustainability project and to understand the project's impact over time.



Through early sustainability “wins”, clear, metric-oriented goals, and communicating successes, sustainability initiatives will benefit your district's bottom line, the environment, and your local community. However, it sometimes isn't so easy to get the “green light” on sustainability projects.

Sustainable innovation in business operations has moved to the forefront of the world's more successful corporations with over 81% of the S&P 500 businesses issuing sustainability reports in 2015. These well-resourced businesses clearly predict that only those who retool their operations in support of a sustainable business model will fully flourish in the years ahead. Just like large corporations, park districts have a significant opportunity to lead in sustainability innovation and teach their communities how to incorporate sustainability and reduce impact in their own lives.

The Illinois Green Business Association (IGBA) has been working throughout communities in Illinois to bring this green business economy to scale, providing standards and programming to accelerate the implementation of sustainable practices in businesses and organizations of all sizes. Just as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) created standards for green buildings, the IGBA is at the forefront of creating effective, practical standards to change today's model of business. Within 8 years of existence, the IGBA has worked with over 3,000 businesses to implement green practices, certified over 1.2 million square feet of business space as sustainable affecting over 2,400 employees and has helped Illinois businesses reduce 5 million kWh of energy – enough energy to power about 460 homes for one year.

By using sustainability as a guideline for all activities, park agencies can demonstrate that thinking green is not only smart, but cost and resource effective. They also have a tremendous opportunity to teach millions of people how environmental efficiency is easy, innovative, smart for our everyday lives and our environment. If your agency is just starting to evaluate sustainability opportunities, or looking to innovate, there are some key steps to take to ensure your project gets the 'green light'.

BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL BUY-IN

Frequently, communication of the potential opportunity or benefits of sustainability projects fail due to the language we use to talk about the potential impact. We all know it's good for the environment, and yes, many of us want to do the “right thing.” However, if sustainability can't connect back to these organizational motivations,

the project might not gain the buy-in it deserves. From working with companies of all sizes, the IGBA has identified that the top three motivations for companies to implement sustainability are 1) cost reduction and efficiency; 2) marketing and promotional opportunities; 3) recruit top talent to their organization. A fourth reason for a park district may be to enhance the community's quality of life or exceed community expectations. Use these motivators as fuel to build the case for your sustainability initiative in your organization. How can your proposed initiatives meet these organizational motivations?

Another important step to create buy-in is to align sustainability values with your organization's mission and vision. By connecting the value of sustainability initiatives to your overall organization's purpose or values, you can justify why your organization should be dedicating time and resources to sustainability activities. Use examples of organizations who have already implemented a project successfully and presenting this information as a key opportunity. Reach out to those agencies and learn more, answering some of the questions you know your superior or Board of Directors will ask.

ASSESS AND BENCHMARK

Understanding your current operational practices and benchmarking your utility use is extremely important to justify the economic and environmental need for your sustainability project and to understand the project's impact over time. Without benchmarking or assessing your current resource use and practices, how do you know the projects you're proposing will make a difference?

There are many online tools that can be used to assess current operational practices and estimate current use. The EPA has some great water tools under their WaterWise program, waste assessment rubrics, and other tools to help you assess your current practices. Also, the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (www.istc.illinois.edu) offers free assessments and can look at technical items such as HVAC and boiler systems, waste management, chemical management and much more through their Technical Assistance program. To start exploring opportunities for your park agency, feel free to use the IGBA's green business checklist and assessment forms to help start to identify opportunities to increase operational sustainability (www.illinoisgba.org).

CREATE AN INTERNAL GREEN TEAM

Once you gain clearance to start your project, or start exploring a project, launch an internal green team and start identifying the project's potential organizational impact. Build your green team with at least one representative per department in your organization. For one of IGBA's businesses, a hotel, this was crucial to their implementation of sustainability initiatives and important for creating buy-in. Once you get your team up and running, create an organizational sustainability mission and set some initial goals for your work collectively. Also, determine how you will collect input from other staff. Staff communication and buy-in at all levels is important for a project's success. Empower employees that have a passion for sustainability and let them lead green initiatives. It will help with the overall integration and success of your project.

As you're uncovering opportunities to implement, be sure to find "early wins" for your organization. An "early win" is a sustainability project that doesn't take a large amount of resources and time but can make a significant impact in the organization and be celebrated as a success. Starting your sustainability efforts with some of these "early wins" will help build momentum and support towards larger, more expensive sustainability projects. Set tangible goals, even for these "early win" projects to be able to talk about not only qualitative, but quantitative impact as well, and how that benefits your organization.

PROMOTE AND COMMUNICATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Communicating and celebrating success of sustainability projects is extremely important to continuing the momentum of these initiatives in your organization. Many of our businesses have a green ribbon cutting once they are certified as a green business, celebrating their accomplishments with their staff, partners and the greater community. IGBA also urges many businesses to touch on sustainability in monthly meetings and newsletters to provide progress updates, tangible things staff can be actively doing to help reduce environmental impact and articles on how a project is relevant and happening nationally.

However, whether you are communicating your sustainability efforts internally or externally, don't assume everyone has the same definition for a sustainability term. The Shelton Group, a consulting agency in Tennessee, has uncovered some interesting truths about today's green buzzwords in their report titled *EcoPulse*. The study found that even the simplest sustainability words can be slightly misleading or confusing. For example, if a company labeled a product "recyclable" and "recycled", we generally get a good feeling that we can either recycle it or are supporting the use of recycled materials. However, did you know that not all products made from recycled material can be recycled? It is the responsibility of our businesses to help us, the consumer, be clear on their claims so we don't get lost in the jargon and let down on expectations.

Be sure to define sustainability terms used when promoting your sustainability assets and initiatives. As a reference, the Federal Trade Commission issued a Green Guide for Marketers in 2012 setting guidelines for companies that make green claims. It states that sustainability claims can be made, but not without specific context to back up those claims. Therefore, provide more detail and be as transparent as possible when making green claims about your organization, initiatives, or projects.

IGBA hopes these tips continue to help your park district innovate and gain the "green light" for your sustainability initiatives. For resources about how to implement sustainability initiatives and more information about the Illinois Green Business Association, please visit our website at www.illinoisgba.org or give us a buzz at 331-305-4422.

Even though Kermit the Frog said it isn't easy being green, we know park agencies can lead the way and show communities just how beneficial being green can be.



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THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY ALWAYS KEEPS

GREEN SOLUTIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MIND

By Valerie Blaine

*Environmental Sustainability Chair, Nature Programs Manager,
Forest Preserve District of Kane County*

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County has “green” written all over it. We plant trees. We restore woodlands. We preserve prairies. We save wetlands. We've got the green thing covered, right?



We are always motivated to do more!

The district created the Environmental Sustainability Team in 2012 to ensure that we are always doing the best we can as stewards of the environment. The team is comprised of representatives from all departments, including rangers, office staff, naturalists, planners, ecologists and human resources specialists.

The mission of the Environmental Sustainability Team is to evaluate and recommend environmental policies and actions throughout the district. The group focuses on six areas:

1. Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products
2. Wise Use and Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife
3. Wise Use of Energy Resources
4. Reduction and Handling of Waste
5. Open Space Planning and Preservation
6. Environmental Education and Interpretation

These areas cover all the departments in the district, and every employee plays a role in stewardship.

The team's work is based on the philosophy that environmental stewardship is both individual and collective. Whether a staff member wields a chainsaw on a tree crew or a computer mouse in an office, each person plays an important role.

This group of "greenies" meets quarterly to discuss and create action plans. As the saying goes, it's important to walk the walk if you're going to talk the talk, and we aim to do just that!

Here are just a few of things we're involved in:

- Energy conservation – Electronics in our everyday lives use a lot of energy when not in use. This is called vampire or phantom energy, and it "sucks" natural resources. The Environmental Sustainability Team introduced energy conservation campaign last year, with a surprise appearance of a vampire in a district-wide gathering. (A brave EST member donned a vampire costume for the role!) Following this introduction, all staff have been made aware of the need to unplug appliances. If an employee forgets, and leaves an appliance plugged in while not in use, the vampire just may appear overnight to leave his mark – a bat hanging on the appliance! The goal is to get all staff in the habit of conserving energy by un-plugging.
- Recycling – Everyone knows about recycling, but inspiring people to recycle is another story. With "e-blasts," improved signage, and re-design of recycling containers in the preserves, the EST works to increase recycling in the district. The team organized a district-wide electronics recycling pick up, and a battery recycling program in underway.
- Reduction of waste – Recycling challenges are reduced by purchasing re-usable products. We've made great strides in this area. Disposable dishware and polystyrene cups are becoming a rare sight at district events. We have purchased "real" dishes that can be washed in the dishwasher and used over and over again. (Just like the old days!) These dishes are used at meetings, staff trainings and other gatherings. Several sites have dishwashers and storage cabinets for re-usable dishes. The Environmental Sustainability Team has recommended "Styrofoam-free zones" in meeting facilities. We provide re-usable mugs at nature programs and events.



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“THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TEAM IS A MUCH NEEDED REMINDER OF WHAT MAKES OUR JOBS SPECIAL AND IMPACTFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT...”

It's not all strictly serious business; there's a lot of fun involved in being green. The Environmental Sustainability Team organized a day for all staff to get together and clean up a forest preserve that was in particular need of help. Staff from all departments rolled up their sleeves, put on work gloves and headed into a preserve for a day. Under the direction of the Natural Resources Department, the staff tackled brush clearing, litter collection and recycling to improve the preserve. Accountants worked with rangers, naturalists with tradesmen, and directors with part-time interns in a great show of camaraderie. “I enjoyed working alongside staff, dragging brush, picking up litter, and pulling garlic mustard—and then looking back to SEE what we had accomplished in such a short amount of time,” said Tracey Smith, Director of Human Resources. “I don't always get that instant gratification in my office job.” Additional all-staff clean up events are on tap for 2017.

Environmental stewardship is good for the environment, to be sure, but as Preserve Maintenance Worker Will Aikin pointed out, “it goes hand in hand with becoming more efficient, saving taxpayer money, and ultimately providing better services for our patrons.” The installation of solar-powered gates at 33 preserves is a great example of this. Before the new gates, staff drove upwards of xx miles a day to open and close gates. The solar-powered gates save many miles of driving, fossil fuel consumption, carbon emissions, and staff time.

Some changes are smaller than the installation of equipment like gates – and these small, everyday changes can make a big difference. The Environmental Sustainability Team has raised awareness about

engine idling. Many people leave their engines running while they dash into the office, grab a tool from the shop, or wait at drive-up windows. According to the Environmental Defense Fund, “An idling diesel truck burns approximately one gallon of fuel an hour.” Environmental Sustainability Team members have communicated with co-workers in their departments the importance of turning the engine off, if the vehicle is parked for more than 10 seconds. It's an easy thing to do, it's economical, and it reduces air pollution.

At the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, we strive to be an example of stewardship on all levels. The Environmental Sustainability Team provides the tools to make that happen. It's not about pointing out problems; it's about offering solutions. The team does the legwork, researching alternatives to energy inefficient or harmful products and practices. We then make recommendations for actions.

It's easy to get caught up in the routines of our jobs and lose sight of the real reason we're here – to preserve, protect and restore natural areas. “The Environmental Sustainability Team is a much-needed reminder of what makes our jobs special and impactful to the environment,” said Tracey Smith, Director of Human Resources.

Naturalist Josh Libman finds it rewarding to be part of the team. “The effects of being good stewards are wide-reaching. From the purchasing of environmentally friendly products to reducing our use of fossil fuels, we are making a difference.”

And making a difference is what it's all about!



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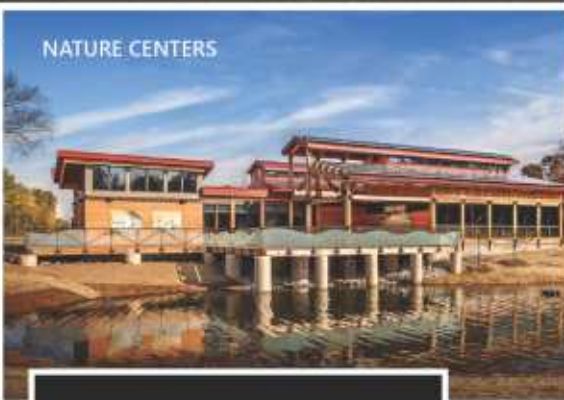
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Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center:

Green in Every Way

By Diane Stanke,

Director of Marketing & Customer Service, Park District of Oak Park

The Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center (AGEEC) demonstrates the Park District of Oak Park's (PDOP) dedication to the environment and good stewardship of our natural resources. This 2,400 square foot, fully-accessible facility is located in Austin Gardens, often described as our "secret garden." Near Oak Park's bustling downtown area, Austin Gardens is enveloped in trees, blocking out city noise in the near distance while making it easily accessible by foot or bike. It is a passive park featuring a large meadow surrounded by a beautiful walking path. In summer months, Austin Gardens is home to Festival Theatre, the Midwest's oldest professional classical outdoor theater group.

The AGEEC stands on the south end of the park, replacing a dilapidated garage that was once used for storage. Built to LEED Platinum standards, the district is currently in the final submittal process for certification. The AGEEC's envelope features a Passive House Design and is one of only 16 projects in the United States that will potentially be Living Building Challenge Net Zero Energy Certified.

Project Purpose

When the master planning began for Austin Gardens over ten years ago, our community asked for a building with a classroom which could be used for programs and workshops, a preschool program location as well as a facility to host one of the district's summer camps and of course, restroom facilities. Austin Gardens is one of three locations for outdoor ice rinks in the winter months. A small kitchen/concession area was included in the facility to serve residents. Of course, the facility needed to have storage space for supplies and materials in addition to a separate space for Festival Theatre. Originally the facility was designed with one main (701 square foot) meeting space/classroom and three separate storage rooms and one of the storage spaces was re-designed into a preschool classroom.

With the location of this facility in Austin Gardens, one of PDOP's most cherished and beautifully-landscaped parks, the district knew this facility had to be a showcase for environmental education. Sustainability is one of the Park District of Oak Park's organizational values and was the reason that the building became a LEED Platinum project and ultimately a valuable community resource.

Community Involvement

In fall 2004 CYLA Design Associates, Inc. was engaged by PDOP to conduct a study for the purpose of identifying and designing improvements to Austin Gardens. The process began with a programming study that consisted of a series of meetings with residents and organizations with a strong interest in the park. Focus group meetings for maintenance and safety, aesthetics and nature, and business and tourism were held along with meetings with park neighbors and the general public. These meetings proved useful in garnering comments about the existing conditions, the problems and positive aspects of the park as well as generating ideas and visions for its future. PDOP staff was also interviewed and shared their knowledge and observations about the park. Along with a programming study, a detailed site analysis was conducted.

Phase One of the Austin Gardens renovation project was completed in 2007 including electrical upgrades, fencing improvements, the addition of concrete pads and benches, landscaping and irrigation. Phase Two improvements were scheduled in the park district's Capital Improvement Plan for 2013. In preparation for this project, architectural drawings were created for the AGEEC and landscaping plans were created for the area surrounding the building. These landscaping plans were reviewed by the Park District Greening Advisory Committee prior to final approval. A \$400,000 grant application to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources was submitted and received in 2012 for Austin Gardens Phase Two improvements which included the construction of the AGEEC.

Creative Use of Materials

The creative use of building materials is the most exciting part of this project due to the many environmentally-friendly building features. The building is located between two large trees and set at an ideal angle to enjoy the beautiful landscape of the park. It is designed from top to bottom to minimize its impact on the park and to "fit in nature." The exterior is clad in cedar trim and a sustainable siding that mimics a natural cedar color. The lower rear and side portions are finished in a durable, long lasting metal siding that is the exact color of the tree bark. With the raised portion of the front of the building in cedar, it is meant to act as a tree raised up along with large overhangs creating the "canopy feel" of a large tree.

All facility windows are triple-glazed for maximum UV protection, insulation and comfort. There are many windows in the building for natural light, which help lower energy usage further.

Green Insulation

Insulation was made from all green certified products including 4.5 inches of rigid insulation under the concrete slab that is carried all the way up the foundation walls and to the building's roof. On top of the exterior insulation is blown-in cellulose insulation on the interior walls and ceilings as well as spray insulation in the ceilings along the back of the walls. The concrete slab was grinded and polished with a durable epoxy coating throughout the building creating a long lasting, durable and easy to maintain surface.

Water Management

A 1,500 gallon cistern collects rain water from the roof and directs it into the building where it is treated and used for flushing of the toilets. The cistern's water overflow goes into a rain garden on both sides of the building with native plantings and soil conditions that will handle all on-site storm water. All pavers are permeable to allow for water penetration and collection into the ground.

Powering the New Facility and Finishing the Exterior Using Reclaimed Wood

The HVAC system is a geothermal ground sourced heat pump with two 500' deep wells. Photovoltaic panels take up the entire upper raised portion of the roof and make up a 19.6 kW system capable of generating the entire power needs for the building. One of the features of the building that the PDOP is most proud of is the urban timber re-use for all interior trim. Like many agencies in the midwest, the PDOP is losing Ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer epidemic. PDOP re-used trees from a nearby park by having them milled into trim for the building. A portion of the outside of the tree was saved to show the actual bores as an exhibit in the building.

Facility Costs

One of the most important challenges of this project was the budget due to the pursuit of a Platinum LEED level certification. The entire project, including landscaping and contingency was \$1,300,000. The architectural fees for landscape design, building design, engineering and green consulting were \$125,500. The PDOP Board was supportive of the project, but wary about the high price tag associated with a building that was only 2,400 square feet. As such, alternative funding sources were explored. PDOP secured a \$400,000 Illinois Department of Natural Resources OSLAD Grant and a \$30,000 state solar grant. Following much work, PDOP also secured a \$152,000 private grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) after park district representatives met the head of ICECF and explained the purpose of the building.

The park district initially bid this project out to general contractors but the bids came back much higher than expected. As a result, the project was bid out to individual subcontractors and the park district of Oak Park took the lead to build the AGEEC. By eliminating the general contractor, we were able keep the project within budget and still achieve LEED Platinum status while having this amazing facility built.

The Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center has only been open since June 2016. Annual projected maintenance and operation expenses for the facility are \$19,000. These costs include \$6,600 for cleaning, \$7,600 for maintenance, \$4,800 for water and sewer and best of all, there is expected to be no electrical utility costs!

Growing the Future with Sustainability and Education

Since the grand opening on June 11, 2016, the Environmental Education Center serves as a hub for most of the PDOP's nature-based programming. This building hosts a nature-based preschool program during the week and will be an after-school child care site for the 2017-18 school year. Some amenities are also used by the Festival Theatre. PDOP hosts weekly yoga classes and over 50 nature programs have been scheduled in the building's main classroom since its opening, ranging from green building techniques and lawn care classes to birding, urban bats and leaf printing. On October 1, 2016 the AGEEC was part of the Illinois Solar Tour which offered informal tours of homes and businesses utilizing solar power. Monthly AGEEC tours are offered to those interested in learning more about the many sustainable features of the facility. About the size of an average home, the AGEEC is a community asset helping educate residents on how to incorporate sustainable aspects into their own homes while introducing them to the many wonders of nature. More importantly, this facility is used to educate our youth and in doing so, the PDOP hopes it will instill a sense of responsibility for the importance of preserving and protecting our environment.



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The 2016 IP&R Magazine Photo Contest Awards

The Illinois Association of Park Districts and Illinois Park and Recreation Association are proud of the high caliber of content that our readers submit to *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine.

We are especially grateful to those in the field who have an eye for capturing the beauty of the parks, the wonder of nature and the smiles on the faces of young and old alike, who have participated in the programs offered by Illinois' outstanding park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies.

Congratulations to our 2016 Give Us Your Best Shot photo contest winners!



RECREATION/PEOPLE AT PLAY



1st Place

Mike Terson
Buffalo Grove Park District
"Take a Deep Breath"

2nd Place

Justin Sienkiewicz
Schaumburg Park District
"Airborne"



SPORTS



1st Place

Mike Frankowski
St. Charles Park District
"Keeping Your Eye on
the Ball at Pottawatomie
Park"

2nd Place

Sheri Potter
Warrenville Park District
"Kickin' It"



WILDLIFE

1st Place

Justin Sienkiewicz
Schaumburg Park District
“Alternate Universe”



2nd Place

Mike Frankowski
St. Charles Park District
“Rare Giant Swallowtail
Butterfly at Pottawatomie
Golf Course”

NATURE/LANDSCAPE



1st Place

Elizabeth Mantynband
Park District of
Highland Park
“Art Through Nature”



2nd Place

Rebecca Grill
Park District of
Highland Park
“Rosewood Beach Sugar
Maple In All It's Glory”

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who submitted a photo in 2016.

A special thanks to Steve Hinrichs, professional photographer and owner of 11 Acre Studio for judging our annual contest!



PEOPLE & PLACES



Mokena Community Park District Announces Mike Selep as New Executive Director Along with New Staff Appointments

There are four new faces at the Mokena Community Park District (pictured left to right). Dawn Morsovillo is the new executive administrative assistant. She brings over 20 years of government and business experience to the agency serving most recently as the document control coordinator with Illinois Tool Works. Nick Mazzuca is the new recreation supervisor of athletics. He has worked for the district as a recreation supervisor for several years and served as an assistant under the previous supervisor of athletics. Mike Selep is the new executive director. He came from the Fox Valley Special Recreation Association and has worked for the Illinois Park and Recreation Association, Schaumburg Park District and West Suburban Special Recreation Association. Mike stated "It has been amazing to join the dedicated staff of seasoned professionals with the added mix of passionate new staff. We have an outstanding team that works hard to serve the community." Rebecca Phetteplace is the recreation supervisor of special events and trips. She came from the Park District of Oak Park where she served as the youth recreation program coordinator.



Warrenville Park District Names Tim Reinbold New Executive Director CPRP

Tim previously held the position of superintendent of recreation for the Warrenville Park District from 2013 until being promoted to the executive director position. As the executive director, Tim is directly responsible to the Warrenville Park District Board of Commissioners. Tim's primary function is to carry out the policies adopted by the Warrenville Park District.

Tim is the administrative head of all

departments and divisions of the facility development and business management of the Warrenville Park District. Tim, a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional, earned his bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University. Tim came to Warrenville from the Oakbrook Terrace (IL) Park District, where he was director of recreation and park services. In that capacity, Tim managed the day-to-day operation of the parks department and supervised the recreation department, including recreational programs, facilities and staff. Tim has a bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University and has also worked for Elmhurst YMCA as the youth sports director and Lisle Park District as athletics supervisor and Meadows Center supervisor.



Byron Park District Selects Paul Zepezauer as Executive Director

After working extensively with the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the board of commissioners of the Byron Park District has hired Paul Zepezauer as its next executive director to lead their agency.

Paul has nearly 18 years of parks and recreation experience. For the past 10 years, he served as the director of recreation for the Sterling Park District. Prior to that, Paul was employed as the athletics coordinator for the Elk Grove Park District for six years.

He has his bachelor's degree in health, leisure and sport studies from the University of Iowa with an emphasis in community and commercial recreation. Paul is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional.

Paul looks forward to continuing to provide outstanding parks and recreation opportunities to the residents of Byron.

Warrenville Park District Announces the Retirement of Executive Director Diane Dillow

Diane Dillow, who served as the executive director of the Warrenville Park District for the last 17 years has retired. Starting as recreation director for the Carol Stream Park District in 1976, Diane's forty plus year career has been one of remarkable professional service and accomplishment.

Serving as Suburban Parks and Recreation Special Projects Chairman in 1975, 1981 and 1982 as well as Recreation Section Treasurer from 1984 through 1986 Diane started out early showing that her dedication and service would clearly benefit Illinois Parks and Recreation. With her work with the IPRA Board of Regents Professional Development School from 1995 to 2004 becoming the Chairperson in 2003 then serving again from 2011 to 2015 Diane proved her leadership skills. Diane's greatest legacy is the positive impact she has accomplished within the Warrenville community as a whole including her legacy project, the Director's Challenge course which will be a testament to her customer focused spirit for years to come. We wish Diane the best as she retires.

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