

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER** – At 1:08 PM, the special meeting to discuss the City Park ownership was called to order.

**ROLL CALL** – Park Board commissioners attending were Board President, Don Peasley, as well as Vice President, Gary Nodine, and Bob Thomas. Staff attending from the Park District were Becky Strait and Vern Haseley. Attending from the City were Mayor, Tracy Welch; Alderman, Rick Hoefle, and Kevin Bateman; and Street Superintendent, Walt Landers.

**VISITORS** – NONE

**SUMMARY** – Tracy proposed a summary be given of events leading up to the current meeting. Becky stated that the Park District has approached the City to request transfer of ownership of the City Parks, to include Mayfair, Melrose, Ray White, Postville, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street parks and this meeting is a continuation of efforts to come to an agreement following the September 14, 2021 City Council meeting the Park District attended to present possible park improvements and benefits to the community.

**DISCUSSION** –

Tracy Welch asked if it is still the Park District's intention to ask for ownership of all of the City parks. Becky Strait stated that the purpose of the meeting is to determine what the best approach will be to move forward on this, in light of the City wanting to take a more stair-step approach. The Park District is willing to entertain other ideas that may lead to a more gradual approach, which would align more with the City's desires. As a result, the Park District has given thought to the idea of focusing on the development of 8<sup>th</sup> Street Park and further discussing the topic of the maintenance of the other City-owned parks, which the Park District currently maintains.

Rick Hoefle stated that he has been considering a different use of the 8<sup>th</sup> Street land as a prime location for real estate development, which is something he is planning to bring to the City council in the near future. Despite the high demand, there is little to no land available for real estate development currently, and with the potential to improve the land in a way that would enter it into the tax base versus developing the property as a park, this may be a consideration moving forward. As a result, Hoefle does not think 8<sup>th</sup> Street would be a good park to discuss as an initial project. Gary Nodine asked if there were any stipulations on the use of the land when donated to the City and Welch clarified that he has researched this and determined there were no stipulations or restrictions associated with the property in the quit-claim deed from the hospital. Nodine also questioned whether the fitness equipment currently in place would be removed. Hoefle answered that he believes it should be removed as it is a liability more than an asset and there are ongoing maintenance costs and considerations which make the installation of this equipment on City property versus hospital property regrettable.

This potential alternative use complicates the conversation regarding the development of the 8<sup>th</sup> street property as a park and it is therefore recommended that another park project elsewhere be entertained as an initial project. Nodine acknowledged the greater benefit to the City in developing this land for real estate purposes and Strait interjects that this is a matter for debate if you are looking at benefits parks provide to the City that are not strictly monetary (e.g. economic driver, quality of life, community desirability). Hoefle disputes that the parks in Lincoln

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

are used frequently enough to provide a greater benefit to the community. Scully Park (a county-owned park) is the primary park location that he observes being frequented. Kevin Bateman and Welch add thoughts that this property could be used as a location for another assisted living facility similar to Christian Village for seniors or for those on a fixed income who need a smaller residence or duplex. There are many different perspectives as to what the best use of this land should be. When consideration of a dog park on the 8th Street property was previously entertained, Welch said the neighbors did not support this. Since nobody can agree on the best use of this land, it may be better to focus elsewhere.

Don Peasley questioned which park the City is interested in if not 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Hoefle stated Mayfair, Ray White, or Postville would be other options. Bob Thomas queried whether the City has a proposal in mind. Hoefle answered that he already gave his proposal at the council meeting the Park District had representatives attend. Hoefle is not opposed to the Park District taking ownership of the other four parks on a dollar lease per year with a re-evaluation after 5 years of development by the Park District. Peasley stated that in order to qualify for grants, the Park District would have to be under at least a 30-year lease. Strait added that the Park District board is not interested in a lease agreement.

Bateman feels the biggest issue with transferring ownership of the parks to the Park District from the City is the loss of the parks as an asset, which affects the City's net worth, credit rating, and borrowing power. Thomas questioned the value of these assets, which Bateman stated varies from year to year. Strait questioned whether the City would be looking to make any improvements to the parks if they maintain ownership and also whether it is potentially the time of day that Hoefle is observing the park usage that Strait feels is leading to the City's perception that the parks are of little or no value. Strait stated that she uses the parks regularly with her children and does see other people at the parks. Hoefle stated that he is not saying the parks are not frequented, but that he does not see people using them, and he runs by all of the parks except Mayfair and Melrose. Hoefle disputes that anyone is using the fitness court on 8<sup>th</sup> street in the early morning, to which Strait adds that, this year, the programming has not been restarted after Covid concerns caused the parks to be shut down last year. Hoefle stated that further development of the parks may lead to greater use. Strait stated that her perception was that if the City does not see value in parks, there will be no intention for the City to improve the parks under their ownership. Welch clarified that the City has not stated that it doesn't see value in parks. Strait stated that is what it sounds like when City representatives say they are not seeing anybody using the parks, as if there is no incentive to invest in improving the parks. Hoefle reiterates that greater development adds potential to the parks being used for more than just a dog potty area, which is currently what he observes at 8<sup>th</sup> street and Mayfair. Bateman adds that he has made his desire known to develop a park to the level he has seen in Sherman, IL. Strait questioned whether he has a location in mind for a similar park, as she and the Park District board are open to the idea of starting with one park, as long as the discussion on the maintenance of the other parks can lead to resolution on that topic. Melrose or Ray White Park are proposed as options to consider. Strait notes that Ray White Park has had more recent playground upgrades, thanks to the local Rotary club's contribution. Hoefle reiterates that Melrose might be a good option and questions the Park District's potential timeline in beginning development. Strait stated that due to the City park discussion being continued beyond the OSLAD grant deadline for this year, City park development is no longer a project option to submit for during the current grant cycle. Instead, the Park District applied for a different project, which is currently being planned for next year, so the earliest start date for a park project would be at least two years from now, in 2023.

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

Walt Landers questioned how a grant determination is made for the Park District, if this is based on some parameters such as acre or square footage, and whether the Park District as a whole is analyzed. Strait answered that the amount of acreage owned is not necessarily the determining factor for the Park District to receive a grant, but that the total amount of land owned is a factor that goes into the decision, where more land would give a greater chance of receiving a grant. Other factors go into the decision as well, such as whether the project is a duplication of amenities already available in the area, whether it is a novel amenity, cost and community specifics, or whether the Park District is collaborating with other organizations and has community support. Landers questioned whether the grants would provide funding for additional operational and maintenance increases associated with the project. Strait clarified that this is not included in grant funds.

In light of the discussion on grant funds and their 50/50 funding structure, Welch proposed that the Park District and the City partner on a park project in which both parties contribute 50% of the capital costs in order to move forward on the project earlier than 2023. Peasley questioned whether the City would have this capability since it does not tax for the parks. Welch answered that the City owns the park properties. Peasley still questioned the funding aspect since the City does not have taxing authority for park improvements. Bateman stated that there is tourism money available and Hoefle disputed that tourism money can be used for the parks. Welch stated that along with their ownership, the City has the authority to do anything on the parks that the council approves, they just have not done so in the past. Despite not knowing the costs involved, Welch stated that now is the ideal time to commit to a park project because the City currently has ARPA grants and he believes they will have enough extra to do a small project like this if the aldermen support this idea. This would allow the possibility of progress on park improvements without waiting two years. Hoefle questioned who would own the park, stating that the Park District runs into an issue if they do not own it. Nodine stated that the taxpayers are going to own it. Welch responded that the Park District does not run into an issue if they are funding the project without the use of grants, and likens his proposal to the grant process, but without the ownership stipulation since 50% of the project funding, even when using grants, has to come from the Park District directly. Vern Haseley stated that he does not believe the proposal would work because taxpayer money from the Park District would be going to develop a park that the Park District does not own. Nodine agreed that if the Park District does not own the property, they cannot put capital money into it. Haseley also stated another issue would be with the conflict of two entities trying to develop the same park. Nodine pointed out it does not matter what entity owns the parks, we need to remember we are here to support the taxpayers, who actually own it. Strait pointed out that a transfer of an asset from one government entity, the City, to another government entity within the same taxpayer base, the Park District, is still beneficial to those taxpayers. Bateman stated that it is an asset to the City which directly affects its net worth. Nodine questioned what the value loss would be. Bateman stated he has asked the treasurer, but this fluctuates based on property values.

Hoefle questioned why the Park District initially came to the City with the request to transfer all of the City-owned parks to the Park District in order to be in better favor to receive grant funds and now is only requesting one park. Strait stated that this is based on the City's stance that the Park District's "all-or-none" attitude on this topic has been a hindrance to forward progress and the Park District's desire to compromise and work with the City in order to come to an agreement. Hoefle stated that he is in favor of an all-or-none approach with the ownership of the parks transferring to the Park District, with a buy-back clause in place that would allow the

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

City to establish a timeframe for improvements. If goals are not being met by the Park District as established, the City could buy the land back at the specified time. Strait questioned who would establish these goals. Hoefle responded that for Melrose Park, for instance, within a three-year timeframe, the Park District would have obtained the grant funding and completed the development, as shown in the previous council meeting, with two years to further develop the next park, and the next, until, at the end of approximately eleven years, the Park District would own all four parks.

Bateman questioned why the two current parks owned by the Park District have not been developed, stating that this is the question taxpayers keep asking him. Nodine asked for the definition of "developed". Hoefle pointed to the presentation made by Strait. Nodine clarified that he is asking what the aldermen's opinion of "developed" is. Welch and the aldermen state they are basing their opinion of "developed" on the presentation given by the Park District. Based on these standards, Bateman does not believe the Park District's parks are developed. Nodine disputed this by stating that they have playground equipment, 21st Street (Club Exchange) has a basketball court that is used, and Strait added that Club Exchange recently got a playground equipment upgrade. Welch turned the discussion to the fact that the City parks all have playground equipment as well, to which Nodine asked who put that playground equipment in place. Welch believes this to be irrelevant, but is unsure and questioned who put it in. Haseley stated that the Park District did. Welch questioned whether this was out of the Park District's funds, which Haseley confirmed it was. Welch pointed out that this is contradictory to what was previously said about the Park District not being able to apply taxpayer funds toward a project that is not on Park District-owned property, and goes back to the previous point regarding why a joint financing arrangement could not be worked out. Haseley stated that the Park District previously contributed park equipment in good faith. Welch stated that the City would partner with the Park District in good faith as well.

Nodine commented that despite the City claiming to partner in good faith, they would do so with stipulations on the project, which is indicative of distrust in the Park District. Nodine expressed his aggravation in this attitude. Welch responded that the council answers to taxpayers. Hoefle added that the City has had backlash from other seemingly good partnerships that turned bad, citing the theatre project, which indebted the City for a substantial amount of time. Strait pointed out that there is a distinction to be made between partnering with a private individual, who is friends with the mayor, and partnering with another local government body, with which there is no reason to hold mistrust. Nodine added that, for 60 years, the Park District has upheld previous agreements by handling the upkeep and maintenance of the City-owned parks. Bateman stated that the previous ordinance can be abolished and the City can easily afford to take back over the maintenance of the parks. Nodine inquired about staffing requirements to mow the parks and if any additions would be needed. Landers stated that additional part-time and full-time staff would need to be added in order to take back over the park maintenance. Welch added that Landers has already been planning to make a request for the additional personnel. Bateman added that another mower would be purchased as well and that the City is in a position currently to vote and resolve this matter.

Welch pointed out that there seems to be a hang up with mistrust between the City and the Park District. Nodine stated he does not believe this stems from the Park District. Welch noted that Strait has pointed to this issue in the past, and he feels that it stems from the fact that a group of private taxpayers came to the Park District board, three to four years ago, to request help with getting a local dog park built, and were denied. Welch asked whether the Park board members

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

were present at that time and could recollect this request as well as the Park District's response. Nodine admitted that he was not in favor of a dog park. Welch pointed to this as an example of past precedent, which may likely be repeated by the Park District in the future, and would cause the City's constituents to question why the City turned over an asset to the Park District just to have the Park District deny taxpayer requests. Nodine clarified that he personally is not in favor of a dog park but that he is not speaking on behalf of the Park District board. Strait does not believe this is an honest account of the situation with the dog park request because, as has previously been pointed out, the real issue in regards to this situation was that the request to the Park District board was limited to the development of the 8th Street property or the Park District's driving range. Not having ownership of 8th Street meant that it was not an option the Park District was capable of fulfilling, and the Park District did not want to convert the driving range to a dog park. Welch disputed that this was presented in this way in the previous discussion and wants to follow up with the interested parties, as he feels he is being accused of making false statements or misrepresenting the situation. Nodine summarized the situation by stating that the interested parties first approached the City, stating that they wanted the 8th street property developed as a dog park, and were told no by the City. They then approached the Park District stating that they were interested in 8th Street as a dog park and the Park District could not pursue the request further, due to not owning the 8th street property; essentially giving the same response as the City. Welch asked if any alternatives were presented and Nodine responded that there was no stated interest in any other area, except for the driving range, which the Park District was not willing to repurpose. Welch agreed that this was a reasonable response and intends to verify further with the interested parties.

Hoefle wanted to revisit the issue with trust, stating that the Park District came to the City with the request for the five parks, which he does not have a problem with and he liked the presentation; However, he does agree with Alderman Bateman that the Park District-owned parks are not developed to the degree presented to the city, including splash pads and manicured parks, as were presented in the Park District presentation. Nodine stated that, again, we need to come to an understanding on what "developed" means; splash pads require significant investment and ongoing operational expenses with no revenue being brought in, and this has not been budgeted for. Hoefle pointed out that he is simply referring back to the type of "development" that was presented to the City. Welch stated that there would be no revenue from the other park improvements that have been presented either, but that not everything the City does is for the purpose of generating money. Nodine stated that there is the difference with other park improvements, that, while they require an initial investment and eventually will need to be looked at being replaced, they do not have as much of an ongoing expense. Hoefle makes the distinction that, while he personally trusts in what the Park District would plan to do, he has to be able to justify and instill trust in the local taxpayers whom he is representing, just as the Park District also has to take taxpayer input into consideration. There are bound to be taxpayers questioning why the City transferred ownership of the parks to the Park District if they observe that the Park District-owned parks, such as Memorial, have not been well-kept.

Nodine wanted to clarify where some of the citizen scrutiny at Memorial may be originating, as he has spearheaded a few projects to rectify the issue of aging and dying trees in the park as well as restore the growth of natural prairie grasses. In regards to the trees, a state forester was consulted approximately two or three years ago. It was recommended that a program be implemented to start regrowing new trees, as the old growth trees are not going to be sustainable long-term, and it is best to regrow saplings from the specific trees that have proliferated in the park. This requires that areas be left unmowed, in order to allow new growth

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

to take place. Park District staff, as well as community volunteers, have been working to implement this sustainability initiative for approximately two years, which involves a staggered approach, so that there are trees of various ages and stages of development. In regards to the prairie restoration, a group from Dewitt County called Pheasants Forever came in approximately two years ago to plant native grasses, but due to the little rain after seeding and a late burn, which the group has acknowledged, the newly planted foliage was not successful. There are current plans to burn and reseed these areas. In order to support these natural restoration efforts, this park is not going to look "pristine" to the general public. It will continue to be available for public use, though the ball diamonds are not used anymore. Welch stated that Memorial Park was also an area of interest for a dog park, but Strait's predecessor stated that the residents across the street did not want a dog park. Nodine stated this was also said by the City previously about the 8th Street property being used as a dog park. Welch pointed to the fact that the people adjacent to Memorial Park are County residents (not subject to City taxes). Strait added that the development of Memorial Park as a dog park was included in the Park District's master plan. Welch stated that a compromise needs to be made on both sides in order to progress and admitted uncertainty as to what this compromise would entail.

Thomas directed a question to Strait on whether the Park District is guaranteed to receive the OSLAD grant on a yearly basis. Strait answered no and Thomas stated that this would be a factor affecting the timeframe of completion for the proposed park projects. Nodine stated emphatically that the Park District will not receive the grant every year because the grant funding is rotated. Hoefle raised this as another issue, in that it was his perception when the presentation was given, that the park projects over the five parks would be planned in a "domino" fashion over an estimated ten year timeframe and now the Park District is saying there is uncertainty due to unknown variables in the grant process. Hoefle likened it to a downtown project, in which grants were intended to be used, and then were no longer available when the time came and the project outcome was different than anticipated. Again, this makes the situation questionable. Nodine explained that it is true the Park District relies on state funds as the City does. Strait added that the Park District also makes use of bonds for capital funding, which was previously discussed and that once the pool is paid off, the City wanted to see a "sunset clause" enacted to end these bonds. Strait expounded that doing so would prohibit the Park District from pursuing future capital projects, as the Park District is capped on its tax levy. Hoefle stated that this is what raises questions from taxpayers when, as an example, there is a sunset clause on the project at the courthouse, but people believe this will not be honored and taxes will stay elevated. Strait interjected that there was never any promise of a sunset clause on the Park District bonds, due to them falling under a non-referendum bonding process that is simply within the Park District's taxing authority. Bateman disputed this, stating that the previous Park District administrator said in a meeting with he and Welch, that the Park District board specifically made the decision that the tax levy would end after the pool debt was paid off and property taxes would go down. Nodine disputed this as a false statement and stated that this was never brought up before the Park District board. Bateman stated that the big difference is that the City Council represents 13,000 taxpayers. Nodine questioned how many taxpayers the Park District board represents, to which Bateman responded that the Park District board represents itself. Nodine, Welch and Strait refuted this, since the same 13,000 person tax base is also represented by the Park District board. Welch presumes that the Park District board probably receives a very small percentage of the feedback that the City receives from taxpayers, to which Strait and Nodine agree. Nodine added that the feedback he receives is typically positive and Welch added his personal accolade of the Park District's ball fields. Strait points to her understanding that the City is under greater scrutiny, therefore wants to ensure

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

they are thorough in investigating their options. Bateman added that the City is even under a good deal of scrutiny for the two downtown parks, which are county-owned; Welch expounded that there are currently improvement plans in place for these two parks.

Nodine, speaking from a personal standpoint, would like to see improvements made to the parks, which are reasonable and prudent in regards to the Park District's budget, with the understanding that it is not always going to realistically align with restrictive time constraints. He continued that if there is a trust issue between the Park District and the City, then we are wasting our time. He is certain that the Park Board members are all concerned with trying to make things better for the taxpayers in Lincoln, as is the City. Welch questioned how the trust can be rebuilt. Bateman does not believe an all-or-none vote will pass the City Council. Nodine stated that he doesn't believe the Park District wants all or nothing. Bateman stated that that is what the Park District has asked for. Strait clarified that the Park District has revisited this idea and wants to take a more realistic, gradual approach in line with feedback received from the City. Welch responded that, if history has already shown that it is possible for a taxing body to invest money into a property that they do not own, then the "low-hanging fruit" solution is to partner to develop a park, and see what can be done collaboratively. Strait is not opposed to this idea personally, but is uncertain of the legal aspects, and would need to research this further to determine whether this is allowable and would need to seek the board opinion on the matter. Nodine believes the issue would be in securing grant funding. Both Strait and Welch clarified that the proposal is to collaborate without the use of grant funds, which Welch explains would set precedent with the type of improvements that could be implemented and make a larger future request more favorable with taxpayers. Future grant money could then be used for additional park projects. This approach would provide for a better pace and comfort level of the involved parties, including taxpayers.

Peasley questioned which park the City would like to start collaborating on first. Bateman questioned which park is the least developed. Hoefle reiterated that he believes Melrose is a good option because it has the biggest impact on quality of life as it is positioned in a low-income area. Welch asked for the Park District's input since they currently maintain the parks. Haseley and Strait agree that Melrose is a good option. The perception if Mayfair were to be improved would be that investments are being made there due to its greater economic status. Welch points out that there would be greater scrutiny in Mayfair also. Nodine stated that the park has equipment and is used often. Bateman believes that the development of Melrose could be done at lower cost to both organizations through a collaboration and it could still be exemplary, leading the community to be interested in further park improvements. Strait feels this is a good, centrally-located park. Haseley questioned who would be responsible for making the decisions. Welch responded that there would be a committee. Haseley questioned how it would be represented, and believes there needs to be an independent voice on the committee as well. Bateman proposed that the Park District appoint two board members, and the Director, and the City appoint two aldermen, and the Mayor, and the committee could attempt to meet in the middle on decisions with the guidance and approval of the respective board/council. Hoefle stated that he liked the park improvement options that were presented. Nodine and Haseley questioned whether the basis of the presentation was the Park District's master plan. Strait confirmed the presentation consisted of conceptual extrapolations of the master plan. Welch proposed that, consistent with the idea of the Park District's surveys asking for community input, individuals from the community, who actually use the parks, be included on the committee. Hoefle added that it would be preferable if these individuals lived in the vicinity of Melrose. Landers identified this as Ward 2.

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

Strait questioned how the maintenance aspect of the parks would be delineated. Bateman is in favor of abolishing the previous ordinance, which delegates the maintenance of the City-owned parks to the Park District; he proposed this option prior to today's meeting and it was determined that a decision on this would be delayed until after this meeting took place. Bateman stated that personnel needs have already been discussed, the need is present regardless of park maintenance duties, and the budget can accommodate the need for a new lawnmower. Mowing is not an issue and this is an outdated arrangement that originated in the 1960's. Nodine stated that transitioning the maintenance would free up the Park District personnel to focus more on the parks in question as well as the pool and ball fields. Bateman concluded that if this is the sticking point, the City is ready and willing to supersede the previous ordinance. Welch added that the collaboration would still allow the two entities to move forward. Strait agrees with the partnership and gradual, focused approach, allowing for more flexibility amidst changing variables, which are sometimes unforeseen. Nodine believes there will be budget issues for both entities in the next couple of years; Hoefle and Strait comment on the shared risk of both entities in a partnership.

Peasley moved the discussion back to who would be on the committee besides the board/council members present. Welch expressed uncertainty, but proposes that the City and Park District could work together to identify community members, possibly using FaceBook as an outreach tool. Hoefle and Bateman add that the number of people and staying under a quorum are also considerations to keep in mind. Welch cautioned that Ward 2 is a difficult ward to draw volunteers from in his experience. Bateman reiterated the committee style of government allows for freedom of discussion and would be beneficial to collaboration. Welch questioned whether Strait could develop a proposal based on today's discussion, to send to those present, and, once finalized, take back to the respective board/council for approval. Thomas questioned whether the proposal would include the City taking over maintenance of the parks. Welch stated that it would include Melrose Park, equal contribution to the cost of the improvements between both organizations, and abolishing the City ordinance that outlines maintenance of parks. Peasley questioned when this would take effect, specifically whether it would be after the City's fiscal year begins on May 1st and this was confirmed as the effective date. In the meantime, Welch and Peasley agree that the proposed committee could convene to begin planning over the winter months, leading up to the City's budget finalization. Welch believes that a line item for park improvements should be included in the City's budget moving forward because the City, admittedly, hasn't previously focused very much on park improvements. Bateman believes it would be good to budget for the initial park improvement development plan we are discussing, as well as future maintenance, and then establish a budget for the next park project. Hoefle and Bateman questioned how much a project could be anticipated to cost, to which Strait responded that it varies, but a ballpark estimate would be \$250,000 to \$300,000 for a full project, including landscaping. Bateman added that buying vandal-proof equipment adds to the cost in his experience, but helps mitigate ongoing clean-up efforts and maintenance.

Welch believes the department Superintendents should be involved in the committee discussions and that the committee size needs to be kept to a reasonable size in order to maximize productivity. Nodine and Bateman refer to the park in Sherman, IL and Nodine points out that taxes and grant money were used to support a park being developed to this degree. Bateman adds that it was a five-year development process. Hoefle would like to see Postville Park as the next project after Melrose, so that it could be completed prior to the centennial



LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2021

anniversary in 2026. Peasley questioned the current City plan for an addition at Postville Park. Landers stated that there is a proposal for the local wood class at Lincoln Community High School to put in a timber-frame pavilion, but the location is undecided; it will possibly be located to the east of the polling building. Bateman believes every park should have a pavilion of some kind in order to provide shaded areas for picnics. Part of the old civil war statue, which was in place at the courthouse, is buried at Postville Park.

Peasley questioned when it would be good to schedule another meeting of the committee and Strait questioned how many community members should be involved. One or three are recommended in order to keep an odd number for voting purposes and a meeting is recommended to take place one month from now. If three are included, that would be a large group, but this is better to establish greater community input. Peasley recommended the department Superintendents remain advisory, and stated that he will not be personally included in the committee. Welch added that he could remain advisory as well. In order to ensure three community member participants on the committee, it is not necessary to limit the search to Ward 2. Strait questioned when the proposal would be needed and Welch responded three weeks from present. Timeframes for future meetings were discussed. December was proposed, but may be too long to wait between meetings. Hoefle and Welch propose a meeting date of November 12, 2021, to work out details on the draft proposal. In the meantime, the community committee members could be sought out and identified. After coming to an agreement on the proposal at the next meeting, the information can be taken back to our respective board/council for approval in order to move forward in January through March of 2022 to finalize the details. Peasley questioned whether the meeting would take place at the City or the Park District. Being a joint effort, and considering that the Park District has a bigger room, it was determined that the Park District would be a good location. The best time for a meeting was discussed and 4:30 or later was agreed upon.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 2:09 pm.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting date will be Friday, November 12, 2021 at the Park District at 4:30 P.M.



11/11/21

The Lincoln Park District proposes the following:

- 1.) That the Park District focus on improvement of Park District-owned parks
  - a.) Based on feedback from the City Council committee, the Park District intends to focus on improving the Park District-owned parks at this time rather than pursuing any jointly-financed park projects because:
    - i.) It is a greater benefit to the community for each entity to concentrate on improving their respective parks if each is in a position to do so; This leads to more parks being improved overall, providing more value to taxpayers.
    - ii.) In the short term, the Park District needs more flexibility in phasing capital projects according to budget constraints; due to previously-planned projects, the current budget is prohibitive to the addition of another large project in 2022.
    - iii.) The City would like a clear example of a highly-developed park in order to justify transfer of ownership of its parks to the Park District (as ownership transfer results in the loss of an asset, which affects the City's overall net worth and credit potential).
    - iv.) Park District-owned property is protected by statute and must remain as a park (meaning the property cannot be sold or repurposed), whereas the City is capable of transitioning or selling property for other uses; this adds risk to investment on non-Park District-owned property.
- 2.) That the City resume maintenance of the City-owned parks
  - a.) The City is in a position to abolish ordinance #123, established in 1965, (which appointed the Park District in charge of maintaining the City-owned parks and relinquished all taxing authority for playgrounds and recreation to the Park District), therefore, this is the Park District's recommendation for the following reasons:
    - i.) The City has already identified a need for additional maintenance staff and is willing and able to maintain the City parks.
    - ii.) The Park District staff would be freed up to focus more on pertinent Park District projects and maintenance which allows for the enhancement of the recreation program within the City of Lincoln.
    - iii.) The City has expressed a desire to budget for playground improvements in City-owned parks.
- 3.) That the Park District would be willing to consult with the City in a good faith collaboration involving:
  - a.) Acting in an advisory capacity as a park stakeholder on the Park Improvement Committee to avoid unnecessary duplication of equipment or amenities going into the various park improvement projects.
  - b.) Providing pertinent data collected during the Park District's master planning process involving the community needs assessment and City-owned parks