

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
COUNTY OF DUPAGE  
DARIEN PARK DISTRICT  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**March 9, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Sarocco called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the Darien City Hall, 1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois.

**ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were present:

**PRESENT:** Rob Sarocco, Ray Jablonski, Luanne Spiros, Cathy Marchese, Frank Noverini

**ABSENT:** None

**Staff:** Stephanie Gurgone; Executive Director, Matt Henderson; Director of Parks and Facilities, Della Deldin; Superintendent of Finance, Blake Ertmanis; Superintendent of Parks, Jordan Rossi; Sportsplex General Manager; Gina Madden, Attorney

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

**LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR USE OF DARIEN PARK DISTRICT PROPERTY FOR DARIEN FEST**

Executive Director Stephanie Gurgone reported that the Committee Meetings are normally held at the Community Center but since the regular meeting was just held at City Hall, that the Committee Meeting would continue at the same location.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that she prepared information regarding 2019 Darien Fest. She provided the Board with the labor and expenses from 2019, as well as the capital projects that have been completed and planned at Community Park. She reported that there was damage to Community Park last year in the amount of \$6,200. She further reported that the repair was done when the parking lot vendor was working, so that the work was done significantly cheaper and that the actual cost of damage was closer to \$13,000 (based on another quote received).

Executive Director Gurgone reported that the Chamber of Commerce was notified of the damage verbally immediately after the incident. She reported that the Chamber was sent photos and notified in writing on 8/13/19. Executive Director Gurgone reported that the Chamber was then notified of the quotes to fix the path on 9/4/19 and no response was received from the Chamber.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that on 10/3/19 the District requested a meeting with the Chamber and met with them on 10/30/19. She reported that the Chamber stated that they had forwarded the claim to the vendor for the damage and that there was no further update. She further reported that staff discussed that there would be further restrictions at Community Park if the Fest was to continue there.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that the Chamber inquired about using other District properties and that staff explained that the only other feasible option would be at Sportsplex but with date and other restrictions. She reported that on 2/6/20 the Chamber inquired about Westwood Park and that staff replied on 2/10/20 that Sportsplex was the only other Park District property option. She further reported that on 2/27/20 the Chamber officially requested Community Park or Westwood Park for the Fest.

Commissioner Luanne Spiros stated that the Chamber is a 501(c) 6 organization and that Darien Fest profit does not come back to the parks. She stated that she has concerns for safety and that Community Park is not fit for the use and that the District needs to treat renters equitably. She further stated that allowing Darien Fest at Community Park is in conflict with the District's mission.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that emotion needs to be taken out of this, as the Chamber is a renter of our park. She stated that no other groups are allowed to rent the entire park, like the Chamber does for Darien Fest.

Commissioner Cathy Marchese stated that she has been approached by residents stating that the District is not playing nice. She questioned why PDRMA can't be used to file a claim.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that per the contract, the Chamber is fully responsible for the damage to the park. She explained that PDRMA is a self-insured pool, and that the contract is written so that the District should not be filing a claim if the damage is not due the District's fault. She also stated that if a claim, it will cost the District money, because there is no guarantee PDRMA will be reimbursed by the other insurance company.

Attorney Gina Madden reported that the Board is the steward of the taxpayers and there was no agreement between the Park District and the vendor who caused damage, the agreement is with the Chamber.

President Rob Sarocco stated that it is unfortunate that the Chamber put the District in this position.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that staff is trying to do what is right. She stated that there are no residents in the audience who are complaining about Darien Fest, nor the Chamber of Commerce representatives.

Commissioner Spiros stated that this event is not fit for the use and that the environment is different than it was 30 years ago.

Executive Director Gurgone expressed the safety concerns and that it is a significant risk.

Director Matt Henderson reported that the District has no control over the event, as it is fully run by the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Ray Jablonski stated that the Board was elected by the taxpayers and it is the Board's responsibility to the community. He stated that the District should do business with ethical entities and that the Chamber did not live up to their signed contract.

There was some discussion regarding how to go forward if the Chamber pays the \$6,200. President Rob Sarocco stated that he was concerned regarding the public opinion of the Park District. He questioned the meeting with the Mayor, as was proposed.

Attorney Madden stated that this is not a negotiation and nothing to do with the City. She stated that she can prepare a demand letter to ask for the funds due, as per the contract.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that she viewed the City Council Meeting discussion regarding Darien Fest and that she was disappointed in the comments that the Mayor made, as they are not accurate. She stated that there were no comments from any of Aldermen.

Superintendent Blake Ertmanis reported that every year there is non-quantifiable damage to the park from Darien Fest. There is always wear and tear on the park from the number of people at the park.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that it has been reported that the Chamber has looked for alternate locations, but the local School Districts and DuPage County Forest Preserve said no to Darien Fest.

There was further discussion on how to go forward if the money is paid. Commissioner Spiros stated that she would not be in favor even if the money was received.

There was more conversation regarding how to proceed.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that she would prepare facts for the Board to use to respond to residents. She further reported that the Board can think over what was discussed and that Attorney Madden will draft a letter to the Chamber.

## **ADJOURN**

**There being no further discussion, Commissioner Jablonski moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Spiros that the meeting be adjourned. Upon roll call vote the Motion was thereby carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

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Rob Sarocco, President  
Darien Park District

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Luanne Spiros, Secretary  
Darien Park District