

WOODRIDGE PARK DISTRICT
Fred C. Hohnke Community Center
Special Board Meeting
March 14, 2023



CALL TO ORDER

President Cohen called the Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:30 p.m. Upon a roll of Commissioners being called, the following were Present: Cohen, Coleman, Kranz, Mahoney, Venouziou. Absent: None. Staff present: Adams, Knitter.

Public Attendance: Brad Bosch & K.G. Ishii, 2921 71st Street, Woodridge, IL; Dave Jones, 2912 71st Street, Woodridge, IL and Paul Warrant, 2925 71st Street, Woodridge, IL.

PUBLIC HEARING

The President announced that the Board of Park Commissioners is holding a Special Meeting to conduct a Public Hearing held specifically to solicit public review and comments on a proposed recreational trail in Hawthorne Hill Woods in advance of applying for an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trail Program grant. President Cohen called the public hearing of March 14, 2023 to order at 6:30 p.m. The following Park Commissioners were physically present at said public hearing location: Cohen, Coleman, Kranz, Mahoney and Venouziou. Staff present: Executive Director Adams and Director of Parks, Planning & Development Jennifer Knitter.

President Cohen said let the record reflect that the Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Suburban Life Newspaper on Thursday, March 2, 2023 and posted on the Woodridge Park District's website, and principal place of business.

President Cohen announced all persons desiring to be heard on this matter will have an opportunity to present written or oral testimony to the Board of Park Commissioners. He then deferred to Jenny Knitter, Director of Parks, Planning and Development to provide an overview of the proposed Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail development project.

Knitter stated the proposed recreational trail was conceptually planned in conjunction with the Village of Woodridge and Woodridge Park District 2014 Town Centre Area master plan. The District completed final engineering for the layout and construction of the .65-mile trail which will meander through Hawthorne Hill Woods to expose users to the many natural features of the woodlands and connect on the south and north ends of Hawthorne Hill Woods to the 21-Mile Woodridge Comprehensive Multi-Use Pathway System. Knitter reviewed in more detail the trail materials to be used consisting of mostly limestone screenings and asphalt over stormwater culverts in flood prone areas and at the connections to the existing multi-use pathway system. She further described the alignment of the ADA accessible recreational trail. Knitter added the District is finalizing an application for the IDNR Recreational Trail Program seeking a \$200,000 grant to offset the estimated project cost of \$500,000. Knitter concluded her overview of the proposed trail project.

President Cohen asked before the Board takes any testimony from the public, would any Commissioner like to make comment regarding the proposed Trail? President Cohen asked for clarification regarding the location in proximity to the Girl Scout property and the location of the culvert crossings. Commissioner Coleman asked if the proposed trees to be removed will be replaced. Knitter summarized the typical Village code requirement for replacement of trees based on the quality of the trees from low to high to include the species. Cohen asked for clarification on the timing history of the development the existing multi-use pathway system, in which Adams replied the north-south segment along Woodridge Drive was developed by the District in the 1970's and the east-west segment in early 2000's, which was funded equally between the Village and Park District but maintained by the Park District. Commissioner Coleman said

the project looks good to him. Commissioner Mahoney asked if the proposed limestone screen path will be similar to that built in the adjacent forest preserves (e.g. Green Valley)? Knitter replied it will be similar. President Cohen asked what type of contractors typically construct this type of work and Knitter replied typically paving contractors. Additional discussion ensued regarding the benefits of using limestone screen paths. Commissioner Coleman asked is there any push back from cyclists riding on limestone screens paths. Adams replied as a cyclist himself, based on his experience of riding forest preserve paths there doesn't appear to be any issues other than immediately following prolonged period of a rain event and with the exception of those cyclists with high-end road bikes. Commissioner Mahoney commented it actually deters high speed cyclists for safety reasons.

President Cohen then asked are there any resident or members of the public here this evening that wish to provide oral or written testimony concerning the proposed Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail? Residents Brad Bosch stated on behalf of he and K.G. Ishii [2921 71st Street, Woodridge, IL] he's a neighbor on 71st Street located two houses down from the existing driveway public easement. Mr. Bosch asked since the project was previously bid based on an asphalt trail and now is proposed to be limestone screenings, will the District ever consider paving the trail to asphalt in the future? Adams explained the preference of non-paved trails by the Recreational Trail Program grant and Knitter added the District doesn't anticipate paving the trail in the future pending any future public demands. Mr. Bosch then asked if the District has any other development plans for the Hawthorne Hill Woods property? Adams explained the Town Centre Master Plan which includes the Hawthorne Hill Woods property, calls for a nature playground and potentially additional interpretative sub-trails from the proposed trail alignment. Resident Dave Jones [2912 71st Street, Woodridge, IL] asked if there was going to be any building development, in which Adams replied no. Knitter added the master plan also identified potential mountain biking sub-trails. Mr. Bosch stated there are some existing walking mulched trails and asked what will happen to those trails. Adams responded those will stay in their natural state of being mulched trails. Mr. Bosch added his primary concern is the amount of park walkers and cyclists using the existing public drive easement that dually serves as a private driveway to the one home [2921 71st Street, Woodridge, IL] instead of using the existing pathway system which is an annoyance to that property owner and the neighbors. Mr. Bosch asked if it would be possible to relocate the existing access gate currently located south of the existing pathway to the north side of the pathway to discourage biker and pedestrian access on the driveway easement? He added even though the property owner placed No Trespassing signs along the drive, park users are ignoring them. Further discussion ensued regarding the need for the easement, which Adams explained was for access to the previous home on the property, ongoing maintenance access for the woodlands and access to a sanitary easement that transects the property. Resident Paul Warren [2925 71s Street, Woodridge, IL] added to the conversation that he too suggests relocating the gate to the north side of the existing pathway. Mr. Warren expressed his support of the trails but was curious of the benefits of using limestone screenings versus mulch and the cost impacts. He also suggested that the "Y" radius alignment connecting the proposed path to the existing trail be increased to further deter use of the public easement driveway. Adams further explained the proposed use of limestone screen materials versus asphalt. Mr. Warren expressed his preference for not paving the proposed trail with asphalt. Mr. Warren also expressed his concern of the Town Centre park development and how it [development] may lead into the Hawthorne Hill Woods property and will that lead to more development within the property. Adams explained the initiatives the District is taking regarding the Town Centre property to ensure it is preserved for open space, park use and public grounds in perpetuity and to eliminate any potential building development. He further explained the master plan components of the proposed Town Centre community park development. Mr. Bosch reiterated the recommendation to widen the "Y" alignment for both cyclist safety and minimize traffic on the driveway easement. Adams stated the District will consider the suggestions to relocate the gate and reassess the "Y" alignment radius subject to engineering review to deter pedestrian/cyclist use of the public driveway easement. Knitter further explained the need to maintain the public driveway easement for maintenance access. Additional discussion ensued regarding snowplowing of the drive and sidewalk between the driveway and the existing pathway, need of the public easement, relocating "No Trespass" sign closer to 71st Street, repaving of the driveway on the easement following current construction activity and proposed Town Centre parking lot. Adams explained the maintenance responsibilities of the pathway system between the Village of Woodridge and the Park District and further provided an overview of the Town Centre master plan. In conclusion, Adams said the District will further look into the residents' suggestions presented tonight.

President Cohen asked Secretary Mahoney and Executive Director Adams if the District received any written or other type of correspondence regarding the proposed project? There was none.

President Cohen stated with all persons desiring to be heard have been given an opportunity to present oral and written testimony regarding the proposed Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail, he entertained a motion to adjourn the public hearing.

MOTION by Coleman and seconded by Mahoney to adjourn the public hearing for the proposed Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail project at 7:19 p.m. President Cohen asked if there were any further comments or discussion from the Commissioners.

There being none, President Cohen requested a roll call. Upon a roll being called:

AYES: Coleman, Mahoney, Venouziou, Kranz, Cohen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

President Cohen in open session, referred to Agenda D.1.a. Hawthorne Hill Woods IDNR Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Grant, Authorization to Apply under the Executive Director's Report. Executive Director Adams deferred to Jenny Knitter, Director of Parks, Planning & Development. Knitter provided details regarding the RTP grant to include the maximum amount of \$200,000; federal share versus local share match percentage requirements, and the required non-refundable fee of \$300.

Knitter recommended Board consideration to authorize Staff to apply for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant requesting \$200,000 to include a non-refundable grant application fee of \$300 for the Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail Development Project.

Park Commissioner Mahoney moved and Park Commissioner Venouziou seconded the motion authorizing Staff to apply for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant requesting \$200,000 to include a non-refundable grant application fee of \$300 for the Hawthorne Hill Woods Recreational Trail Development Project.

After a full discussion thereof, President Cohen requested a roll call. Upon a roll being called:

AYES: Mahoney, Venouziou, Kranz, Coleman, Cohen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn was requested. MOTION by Mahoney, seconded by Kranz to adjourn the special board meeting of March 14, 2023 at 7:24 p.m.

ALL AYES. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted.



Jack Mahoney, Secretary