



# Park District of Oak Park Park District Citizen Committee (PDCC)

## **Mission and Guiding Principles**

It will be the mission of the Park District Citizen Committee to monitor Park District activities with a broad mandate. This committee will oversee the implementation of the Oak Park Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan, and provide a valuable communication channel between the Park District and the citizens of Oak Park. The PDCC will provide an independent perspective on parks and recreation issues affecting the community with each member representing only themselves and not any organization they may belong to. Through this cooperative effort, the Park District will be better able to assess community needs and expectations necessary to carry out its mission, “In partnership with the community, we provide quality parks and recreation experiences for the residents of Oak Park.”

## **Specific Responsibilities**

- Act as a direct liaison between the Park District and the community
- Help the Park District to better understand citizen concerns and to be responsive to community needs
- Assist Board and staff in identifying and considering parks and recreation issues and explore future initiatives for parks and recreation in Oak Park
- Collect information and data as needed and provide fresh ideas and insights to the Park District’s decision-making process
- Review and analyze information and data provided by the Park District
- Monitor the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Improvement Program
- Determine annual projects, as identified by the Park Board and Executive Director
- In general the Park District Citizen Committee serves as an advisory group, at the request of the Park Board, and acts as a “sounding board” in alignment with the Park District of Oak Park’s mission, vision and values as approved in November 2004.

## **History**

Public participation in government decision-making has been a cornerstone of democracy since our nation’s founding and few cities can compare to the value placed on citizen involvement here in Oak Park.

The Park District Citizen Committee was organized in fall 2003 to assist and support the comprehensive planning process. The Committee supplied guidance to the planning consultant team to ensure maximum community input, ultimately assuring accountability for the process. The 11 members and 2 alternates were selected based on their skills and areas of expertise, generally emphasizing planning and community outreach. The selection of PDCC members was also based on organizing a group of residents with a broad, community-wide perspective rather than selecting individuals representing particular interest groups. Those who were not selected

for the PDCC were named as resources and were kept abreast of the consultant's progress in the Comprehensive Planning process.

The Oak Park Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan was presented to the Village of Oak Park, Park District of Oak Park and the Park District Citizen Committee on October 23, 2004. One of the recommendations made by the consultants was to continue the Park District Citizen Committee in providing a voice of the community and to collect valuable feedback provided by its members. A continuing need exists for formal informed public advice regarding the current and future planning, programs and projects of the Park District of Oak Park.

## **Composition**

It is the intention that members of the PDCC will represent a general "cross-section" of the community with a diverse range of interests, and that the PDCC will not include a member merely representing a specific viewpoint or a specific user group. Members should be users of parks and recreation in our community. Additionally, it may be helpful that members of the PDCC have skills or experience related to matters relevant to the Park District, such as:

- information gathering and market research;
- public policy and governance;
- fundraising and not-for-profit development;
- transportation planning;
- community planning and design;
- information technology;
- leisure, recreation, health and tourism;
- community outreach and cross-cultural communication;
- property management;
- historic preservation;
- child development
- environmental conservation;
- and accessibility awareness.

## **Selection Method**

Members of the Park District Citizen Committee will be appointed by the Park District of Oak Park Board of Commissioners. The Committee will be made up of 11 members and 2 alternates. Members will serve three year terms from the date of appointment. A committee member may be re-appointed by the Board of Park Commissioners for up to three (3) additional terms. Two auxiliary youth members will also serve on the PDCC for one year terms. A Park Board Commissioner will be appointed by the President of the Park Board to act as a liaison between the Board and the PDCC.

The initial membership of the committee will have staggered terms. All continuing members of the original Park District Citizen Committee, appointed in September 2003, will serve either a

one year or a two year term as appointed by the Board of Park Commissioners. All newly appointed members, as of September 2005, will serve one to three year terms to be determined based on a lottery. Alternate and auxiliary members will share the same responsibilities as other members but will not have the ability to vote.

Members of the committee may be removed by the Board of Park Commissioners, with or without cause. A member may resign at any time by submitting such resignation in writing to the Board of Park Commissioners.

Members of the Park District Citizen Committee will be at least eighteen (18) years of age, except for the youth appointees, and a resident of Oak Park. Committee members will serve without compensation.

## **Meetings**

The PDCC will meet monthly or as deemed necessary by the chair and vice-chair. These meetings will be open to the public. The meeting agendas will be established upon mutual agreement of the chairperson and the Executive Director.

The chairperson will be the presiding officer at all Park District Citizen Committee meetings. The vice-chairperson will be the presiding officer in the absence of the chairperson.

Notice of each committee meeting will be posted on the Park District's web site detailing the date, time, and place of meeting.

Decisions and/or recommendations of the Park District Citizen Committee will be advisory only and will be non-binding on the part of the Park Board of Commissioners. Recommendations will be made using a consensus decision-making process. If consensus cannot be obtained, the chairperson may call for a vote. The minutes will clearly state that consensus on the subject was not reached, but that a vote was ultimately used to determine the recommendation. If a vote is used, the minutes will accurately reflect in detail why the members could not agree and the alternatives that were proposed.

A quorum, consisting of six (6) members must be present to conduct a meeting. A representative of the Park District will be present at all meetings. Members will treat each other with respect, will not monopolize meeting time, and will listen to and try to understand one another's view.

The minutes of the Committee meetings will be the Committee's official report and/or comment. Minutes of the Park District Citizen Committee will be kept on file at the Park District Administration Center and should include:

- date, time, and place of the meeting;
- committee members in attendance;
- summary of discussion and presentation;
- outcome of any vote taken and the method of vote;
- any other information deemed appropriate for the discussions between the members.

## **Executive Director or Designee Responsibilities for Citizen Participation and Coordination**

The Executive Director or designee will provide the necessary information to the Park District Citizen Committee in order to carry out the Committee's stated responsibilities.

The Executive Director or designee will:

- act as liaison between the Park Citizen Committee, Citizens of Oak Park, and the Board of Park Commissioners; and
- respond to comments and inquiries from the Park District Citizen Committee.