

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Thursday, January 26, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS: Anthony Serna, President
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President
Valda Lewis, Secretary
Gilberto Cantu
Eugene Austin

STAFF: Ateria Allen
Dawn Dawkins, Legal
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

Reported by: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: Anthony Serna, Eugene Austin,

Telephonic: Gilberto Cantu

Staff Present: Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, Director
Dawn Dawkins, Attorney

CHIEF SERNA: I'd like to call to order today's Board of Parks and Recreation meeting for Thursday, January 26, 2021. We do have a quorum. Rick Rodriguez called and said he would be unable to attend. We'll move to Administrative matters. First we have approval of January 12, 2021, meeting minutes. I'll entertain a motion to approve.

MR. AUSTIN: Make a motion.

MR. CANTU: Second.

CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

Next we have approval of the payroll dated January 22nd, 2021. I'll entertain a motion to approve payroll from January 22, 2021.

MR. AUSTIN: Make a motion.

1 MR. CANTU: Second.

2 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
3 saying aye.

4 (All signify aye.)

5 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

6 Next approval of Warrant 123120 PB,
7 in the amount of \$186,289.47. Entertain a motion to
8 approve.

9 MR. CANTU: I move to accept it.

10 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

11 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
12 saying aye.

13 (All signify aye.)

14 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

15 Next approval of Warrant 012621 PB,
16 in the amount of \$16,959.05. Entertain a motion to
17 approve.

18 MR. CANTU: I move.

19 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

20 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
21 saying aye.

22 (All signify aye.)

23 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

24 Now now we have Old Business, the
25 request from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Honorary Bench
MOU. I believe, Vanessa, you can speak on this.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes, I can. So I
was working with our attorney, Attorney Dawkins, in
regards to the honorary bench. We have had
correspondence with some of the Board members in regards
to the bench. Miss Dawkins was thinking, and I kind of
felt we needed to do something more in line with what we
have now in the park, and they would have to pay any
extra amount for improvements. So this was specifically
they would know what they would have to pay and all
that. So if we give them an amount for update, paint --
according to the color of the park -- and also the
plaque. So after we approve this, it will be up to them
to redo the bench.

CHIEF SERNA: Attorney Dawkins, have all

1 the changes that were requested and everything -- have
2 they been made to the MOU?

3 MS. DAWKINS: Okay, I'm sorry, I had to
4 unmute myself. I think I misunderstood Vanessa saying
5 they didn't want to change the bench from the park color
6 or something like that? I don't know if I heard her
7 clearly. Other than that, I think I made all the final
8 changes, but I didn't know what she just said. I didn't
9 hear that very well.

10 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I said this is
11 specific to the MOU. If someone would get a different
12 bench, they have to get one that they can spruce up by
13 adding paint to the bench. So that would be a different
14 MOU. This is specific to this MOU.

15 CHIEF SERNA: Okay. It appears all the
16 changes that were requested have been made. I'd
17 entertain a motion to approve the MOU between Alpha
18 Kappa Alpha Sorority Honorary Bench and East Chicago
19 Board of Parks and Recreation.

20 MR. CANTU: I move we approve.

21 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

22 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
23 saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

24 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.
25 Thank you for your work on this,
26 Attorney Dawkins.

27 MS. DAWKINS: You're welcome.

28 CHIEF SERNA: Next item on the agenda is
29 New Business, Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, our Director of
30 Parks and Recreation.

31 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: We have the 2021
32 Greenhouse price list. First and foremost, the prices
33 have not changed from 2019, everything is the same
34 prices. We do have plants and are adding different
35 plants, smaller to large to extra large. Also adding
36 some trees and bushes. Our Greenhouse staff maintains
37 the plant level and keeps them alive, so now we can sell
38 them at a profit.

39

1 CHIEF SERNA: It will be nice to talk
2 about this, that passion and everything, when talk to
3 Hilda about the Greenhouse. She is really excited and
4 this is really nice. I really hope the residents take
5 advantage of what they can buy here. You don't have to
6 be a resident to buy, correct?

7 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct, you
8 don't have to be an East Chicago resident with regard to
9 a purchase. We do have people come from the Highland
10 and Whiting. It's not free to them -- it's free to our
11 residents -- but we charge prices for people out of
12 town.

13 CHIEF SERNA: Any questions, Board
14 members, on the price list for 2021?

15 MR. AUSTIN: Do we know how many plants
16 we would need?

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: We try to have at
18 least 30 to 40 percent in the Greenhouse. The produce
19 give away is on Thursday. So what I have done is some
20 of the golf course staff that we have, because we can
21 put them in the recreation centers, I have taken some of
22 that, and they come and help inside the Greenhouse on
23 Thursday when we do the give away. But, again, there is
24 people in the Greenhouse because it's a lot of labor
25 work that they go through.

CHIEF SERNA: Any other questions?
(None) Entertain a motion to approve the updated list
and prices for 2021 at the Greenhouse.

MR. CANTU: I move we accept.

MR. AUSTIN: Second.

CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Next we have the
agreement with Mechanical Concepts for replacing the
boilers, piping, and pumps in the Greenhouse. So
basically the Greenhouse, the boiler has been there for
many, many years. I don't know if it's the original
one, but I was told they were. I can't believe that's

1 possible because that would be from 1921. So regardless
2 of that fact, they are needing repairs. Actually I got
an e-mail in May telling me how there's a leak in the
boiler.

3 So, with that being said, I ended up
4 going to ask for quotes. We had some companies that
they didn't want to bid on the project. So I asked
5 Mechanical Concepts. Mechanical Concepts is -- we had a
company that we actually used for repairs, but they
6 didn't have a person that could fix the item in our
Greenhouse. So we went to Mechanical Concepts and they
7 understood the issue that we have, so this is the reason
why I'd like to have Mechanical Concepts to be approved
for those repairs for the Greenhouse.

8
9 CHIEF SERNA: I have a question because
at the Fire Department, we had HVAC replacement and the
10 contract says, if abatement is needed. That being an
old boiler, have you done -- have you contacted Public
11 Works about the vendors that do asbestos abatement to
check and see if there is any asbestos in the piping?

12 MR. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So I did not have
13 that in the piping, but they do know that we were
looking to have the pipes removed. They asked me where
14 the duct work or whether that was needed. I don't know.
So I haven't met with the department, but I could ask.

15 CHIEF SERNA: Because the fact that they
16 put that in there, in their contract, means that if they
come across asbestos, which was used a lot in insulation
17 around things like that. If they are not going to
accept it, that's going to be a delay. So if the delay
18 in time -- if you need this done in a timely manner --
you should maybe check first. Public Works has vendors
19 that they deal with asbestos and will come and take
samples and advise you if you do need to have anything
abated in the area.

20 And as far as the other parts of
21 this proposal, did you work at all with Public Works on
this, because a lot of times when you read this, you
22 don't know what they are telling you. Did Public Works
or anybody advise you on this?

23 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So I had Eddie,
24 he comes in and he works with Hilda. They discuss what
the problems are. That's the only person or anyone I
talked to.

25

1 CHIEF SERNA: So basically you trust the
2 vendor. You have to because unless you have within the
3 Park Board any specialist or someone who is
4 knowledgeable, it's such an old system. I'm trying to
5 give you a heads up though, that these are things that
6 we try to get done that could affect the time that it's
7 done, and for sure the price. If they quote you a
8 certain price and they come across issues, you could be
9 looking at 10, 20 percent more of what the original
10 quote was. I'm trying to give you a little heads up.
11 So the total is --

12 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I'm looking for
13 \$150,000.00. Because again, like you said, we don't
14 know what we could run into. So that's the reason why I
15 want to ask for this amount. Again, with Mechanical
16 Concepts, they work a lot in the City and that's why I
17 feel comfortable with them. They have worked in the
18 Greenhouse many years and they send us one individual
19 that comes and fixes things in the Greenhouse. They
20 report to us and we understand what is going to happen.

21 CHIEF SERNA: For this amount of money, I
22 know when I go to Public Works for a contractor, I have
23 to have three bids. And you are advising -- is there a
24 reason why there is no prior bids and why it's only one
25 vendor?

1 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: There was
2 actually three vendors that bid. The other two vendors,
3 you have their comments, and they did not want to bid on
4 the project. So when I asked the controller about this,
5 if this would be sufficient, they said yes, as long as
6 you have the written documentation saying that you
7 reached out to them. You explained to them what needed
8 to be done, and they didn't want to bid on it. Then one
9 of the vendors, one of the comments was a possible bid.
10 Then when we asked them to come in and see it, they said
11 that project was too big. They didn't want to bid on
12 it. The project was just so huge, at this point in time
13 they couldn't tackle it.

14 CHIEF SERNA: All right, \$150,000. And
15 this money is coming out of Parks and Recreation, not
16 coming out of Public Works?

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: It's coming out
18 of Public Works, but I have to get approval by this
19 Board first.

1 CHIEF SERNA: I get it. Before going
before the Public Works Board. Any other questions,
2 Board members? (None) Entertain a motion to approve
Mechanical Concepts replacement of the Greenhouse boiler
3 system, in the amount of \$150,000.

4 MR. CANTU: I move that we accept it.

5 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

6 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
saying aye.

7 (All signify aye.)

8 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

9 Here on the contract, on the last
point, it includes a warranty of one year parts and
labor, on all the equipment.

10 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

11 CHIEF SERNA: That's probably the
standard warranty.

12

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Next we move to
13 addendum with the Green House - A - Fex Company. The
addendum we are asking for because the vendor that we
14 had, unfortunately the owner is not able to send us the
actual contractor agreement yearly. They also have the
15 company that comes and does the maintenance on the fans
that turn on the climate control. They also fix the
16 windows. Again, they were not able to give us an
agreement at this time. So basically we are agreeing to
17 have the same contract as we previously did. So we
prepared the addenduem for that instead.

18

19 CHIEF SERNA: So the addendum extends the
same price and everything for 2021. There is no price
increase?

20

21 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Absolutely not.

22

23 CHIEF SERNA: Any questions on this,
Board members? (None) Entertain a motion to approve
the addendum to the contract, which will cover now
24 January 2021 to December 31, 2021, amount of \$2,250,
between Green House - A - Fex and the Board of Parks and
Recreation Department.

25

MR. CANTU: I move that we accept it.

1 MR. AUSTIN: Second

2 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
saying aye.

3 (All signify aye.)

4 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

5 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Next we have
proposal for Perma-A-Seal for Smith Park basketball
6 courts. I was told when I first came to the job, by
Myra, that this was approved by the Board, that the
7 courts were approved. I unfortunately did not find the
paperwork for approval and our Board can't find it. So
8 I'm bringing it before the Board because I would like
approval to have this done. We have reached out to
9 other companies, but Perm-A-Seal has done all the other
basketball courts. This is the main company that does
that work within the City.

10 CHIEF SERNA: All right. Smith Park, is
11 that the park by the Harbor?

12 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

13 CHIEF SERNA: All right, so the park
behind Bessie Owens, just so I understand. Any
14 questions on this, Board members?

15 MR. AUSTIN: I would like to see
something done with the building, because it was a
16 neighborhood place there.

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: This is where
they actually remodeled years ago. The only thing that
18 I have at Smith Park that was talked about remodeling is
the art on the flooring. Hopefully we'll be able to get
19 that passed some time this summer is the goal. But
again, right now that's just the only basketball court.

20 Our parks are pretty well
maintained. The older ones do have many cracks and can
21 be very hazardous to the players that are playing.

22 MR. AUSTIN: The reason why I say this,
like the older guys, they probably aren't in a position
23 now to play, but like you might want your kids or grand
kids, they might go out there.

24 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I will let you
25 know that Perm-A-Seal is the company that paved by the

1 Greenhouse and did the courts there. And I know the
2 Board was amazed at the update for the flooring and how
3 it looks, because it does look different than it did. I
4 hundred percent know how you feel about the connection
5 to the court.

6 MR. AUSTIN: I mean I wouldn't mind going
7 there with the kids.

8 CHIEF SERNA: All right. Entertain a
9 motion to approve the agreement with Perm-A-Seal for
10 basketball court at Smith Park, amount of \$6,948.00.

11 MR. CANTU: I move we accept.

12 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

13 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
14 saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

15 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

16 Is there anything else?

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's it.

18 CHIEF SERNA: Public Comments: None
19 Next meeting date is Tuesday,
20 February 9th, City Hall, Council Chambers, at 5:00 p.m.
21 Entertain a motion to adjourn.

22 MR. CANTU: I move.

23 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

24 CHIEF SERNA: All in favor signify by
25 saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

26 CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

27 Meeting adjourned.

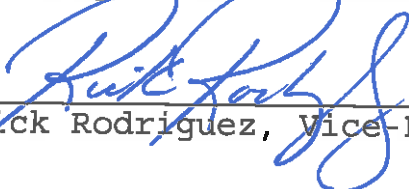
28 **** Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. ****

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday
January 26, 2021

Approved and signed February 9, 2021

Anthony Serna, President



Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis, Secretary

Gilberto Cantu, Member



Eugene Austin, Member



Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 28th day of January, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR