

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BOARD MEMBERS

Grayling Gordon, President  
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President  
Eugene Austin, Member  
Gilberto Cantu, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, August 23, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates  
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present in Chambers: Grayling Gordon, Rick  
Rodriguez, Eugene Austin

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Alysia Dunbar,  
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes: August 9, 2022.

Motion to approve August 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes made  
by Rick Rodriguez. Second by Eugen Austin.

Questions/Comments: None.

Approval & Signing of Payroll: August 19, 2022

Motion to approve August 19, 2022 Payroll made by Rick  
Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Questions/Comments: None.

Approval & Signing of Warrant: 082322PB \$36,304.15

Motion to approve Warrant 082322PB made by Rick Rodriguez  
Second by Eugene Austin.

1 Questions/Comments: None.

2 OLD BUSINESS:

3 MR. GORDON: At this time we'll call our Director of  
4 Parks & Recreation, Miss Hernandez-Orange.

5 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening. And I apologize  
6 for being late. You know Columbus Drive is a lot of fun at  
7 this time.

8 I ended up calling or not me, but my manager called  
9 Christmas Decor like Mr. Cantu stated. And he wanted to make  
10 sure that we ended up changing my name on the quote which we  
11 did. And my e-mail address is there.

12 And after doing that now it's presented before the  
13 Board to hopefully have it approved for the decor.

14 MR. GORDON: That motion was made. There were two  
15 quotes. One for the amount of \$24,536 and the other amount  
16 was \$15,949.

17 This was discussed, Mr. Rodriguez, at our last  
18 meeting. And it was just some changes that she just spoke of  
19 that had to be made. But otherwise it would have been  
20 approved.

21 So can I get a motion?

22 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So what we ended up doing just so  
23 guys know also when I ended up talking to her I wanted to  
24 confirm the pricing for all of the shelters. And what she  
25 did is she explained to me the total of the entire project is  
actually here, the \$23,444.

So that's the entire project that she has. So I  
just wanted to verify that.

Motion to approve Serviscape/Christmas Decor-Holiday Lights  
made by Rick Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Questions/Comments: None.

24 NEW BUSINESS:

25 MR. GORDON: We'll move on to New Business.

1 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: The next item on the agenda is  
2 asking for approval of the past due balance of Zandstra's.  
3 So it's Invoice Number 01079 for the amount of \$89 and 01208  
4 for the amount of \$100.

5 When there was the transition between I guess our  
6 Greenhouse Manager leaving out he unfortunately left  
7 paperwork that we just could not find or we didn't know it  
8 was there. We didn't know there was bills.

9 So the ladies in the greenhouse actually were  
10 cleaning up in that room. And they found the invoices and  
11 gave it to our manager to obviously be paid.

12 With that being said we now need to pay them. And  
13 unfortunately they're past due.

14 So the total amount of the past due balance is  
15 \$189. And I am just asking if it could be approved to pay.

16 MR. GORDON: It could be. But tell me this, there were  
17 no charges that were added to that?

18 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: No accrued charges were added,  
19 no.

20 We actually explained to them the situation of what  
21 kind of happened. And they understood.

22 But for the most part if a company ever asks us,  
23 that there's something that's unpaid, they understand  
24 especially when we continuously are making payments sometimes  
25 something falls through the cracks.

Like for instance on here one was paid on 6/28.  
But the other two were not.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: But they understand there's a process to  
pay them anyway, right?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Right. They do. That's why I'm  
saying they understood. They're very understanding of the  
situation.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: And we're always doing business with  
them.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. Zandstra's is yearly.

1 MR. RODRIGUEZ: They want to keep us.

2 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yeah. We go there yearly.

3 MR. AUSTIN: I'd like to ask you one question. This  
4 might be kind of off. But I wanted to know about these  
5 parks. Riley Park, what is they doing out there may I ask  
6 you?

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Austin, that's separate.

8 MR. GORDON: We have a motion on the floor right now.  
9 We'll go back to it when we have questions.

10 Do you want to second the motion on the \$189?

11 MR. AUSTIN: Okay. I just want to know because I can't  
12 hear too good out of one ear. Maybe I missed it. So we'll  
13 go through this?

14 MR. GORDON: Yeah. We'll come back to it.

15 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

16 Motion to approve Zandstra's Past Due Invoices made by Rick  
17 Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

18 Questions/Comments: None.

19 PUBLIC COMMENTS:

20 MR. GORDON: We'll move on to Public Comments.

21 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: If we would like now, I can I  
22 explain what's happening at Riley park if you would like  
23 that.

24 MR. GORDON: Please do.

25 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Just an update of what we  
actually have going on for everyone.

So first and foremost the Special Events Team has  
moved the Kielbasa Fest that was supposed to be for that last  
Saturday at Kosciusko Park.

It was supposed to be last Saturday. It was  
supposed to rain and storm and all that good stuff. So we

1 did move it.

2 We're now having it on the 27th here at Kosciusko  
3 Park again. So if you guys are interested, please come by.

4 I did have concerns today with some of the Second  
5 District Community expressing concern in regards to the  
6 construction company parking their cars in our parks. So we  
7 actually put the company on notice.

8 We let them know that if they end up putting their  
9 cars in the grass again then we'll be citing them per police.

10 So I contacted our Engineering. We sent e-mails  
11 out to the company so they could know that we're not happy  
12 with the fact that they're kind of continuously parking when  
13 a couple feet down they could park their car.

14 We also have like we said at Riley Park there is  
15 continuous construction there.

16 We have, I don't know, the shade structure that's  
17 going up right now. So you have fitness equipment. But if  
18 you see like other parks they have a shade structure on top  
19 of that.

20 It took awhile first off because of the weather.  
21 Then you have to put it in and it has to cure.

22 Then the dimensions of the structure somehow were  
23 wrong. So we had to work with the company as well as our  
24 contractor to find a way to stretch out the shade structure  
25 to make sure that it was going to fit.

26 We've come to a solution. So hopefully we'll see  
27 it done sometime this week. No later than next week. But it  
28 will get done before the end of the summer. That's a promise  
29 that I've been asking for from the contractor as well as New  
30 Toys.

31 We work with New Toys often. They're the ones who  
32 put the playground. So I expressed my concern and I guess  
33 distaste for what's actually happening there because it's  
34 taking way too long to get that up.

35 And half the battle is because they didn't want to  
36 give us the correct instructions. Like they're you should  
37 have asked for it, blah, blah.

1           And like the contractor said we've had  
2           conversations. We told you what we needed. We never  
3           received it.

4           So it's getting worked out to say the least.

5           Like I said earlier our manager of the greenhouse  
6           is not at the greenhouse anymore. Nothing has changed. We  
7           still have things working in the greenhouse. We're still  
8           planting. We're still giving our giveaways. That has not  
9           changed.

10          We're actually working on our pond right now to  
11          clean out paint and kind of beautify that because everything  
12          has kind of gone by the wayside. So we're kind of just  
13          chipping away at things that we need inhouse.

14          Also working with the contractor, he is going  
15          around to check. So he walked around actually with Chuck  
16          Gardener who did the New Toys, all the new I guess playground  
17          equipment. So they're going around.

18          I told them like I personally have gone and swung  
19          on the swings with my nieces. And you hear squeaks. You see  
20          graffiti. You see things coming apart.

21          And I know we purchased items. And that was from  
22          October. It's gotten pretty bad again.

23          So I have someone going out with him again. And I  
24          told him I would like everything to be kind of looked at and  
25          fixed.

26          Park by park I want to see what exactly is missing  
27          or needs to be fixed because I want it done before the end of  
28          the close of the year which is end of October in a sense.

29          I want to start off spring looking good. So that  
30          is my plan. Hopefully we get that done.

31          We do have funds that I did receive from the  
32          Council. So I am making sure to make use of those funds  
33          correctly.

34          Riley Park is being worked on right now. So we  
35          have the bathroom that's getting done first. That is the  
36          first thing that's happening.

37          Then we're going into the flooring as well as the

1 fireplace. That will be done second. And then we're  
2 ordering the new furniture for there as well as some of the  
furniture at Block Stadium.

3 Again Block Stadium they didn't give me all my  
4 funds. So I'm trying to figure out priorities for that.  
Same thing with Riley Park.

5 I can only stretch so far. We have a stove that we  
6 wanted to get. We have a refrigerator that we wanted to get.  
We do one or the other at this point in time.

7 So those are items that we have coming.

8 We have on August 31st our Shipshewana trip for  
9 senior citizens. We have a Coach Bus that we're taking  
10 people. The price if I am not mistaken is \$25 to get on to  
go to Shipshewana.

11 We leave here at 7:00 o'clock in the morning. We  
12 get there and stay there all day. Come back around 5:00.

13 If you know of anyone who is interested in going,  
14 we have seats available. So please let people know and have  
15 them come.

16 If you need a flier, let me know. We're trying to  
17 get people to come. We have about 25 people going. I would  
18 love to be able to bring some more people on the bus.

19 MR. RODRIGUEZ: How many does the bus hold?

20 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: 56.

21 MR. AUSTIN: To add what you're saying I think it should  
22 be if you're going to start in a park why don't we just try  
23 to finish, draw up a plan for that. Whoever we get to go  
24 into this we should have them give us an accounting of what  
25 they can do and the cost of it.

26 Now we've got two or three things going on at the  
27 same time. And then somebody going to get left out. And  
28 then maybe we not get the contract like we supposed to  
29 because we got three things going on.

30 Just get one place, let's take care of it. And  
31 then we move to the next.

32 MR. RODRIGUEZ: That would take too long. Mr. Austin,

1 that would take too long to do one thing at a time.

2 MR. GORDON: I think they've got different funding  
3 sources.

4 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Well, I am with you, Mr. Austin.  
5 I want equal for everyone. I'm with you 100 percent. That's  
6 why I have everyone go to each and every park.

7 When our contractors come in, they hit every single  
8 one of our parks.

9 This park over here might have two things that are  
10 wrong. But this one over here might have four things that  
11 are wrong.

12 Mr. Gordon, is correct. I don't have the funding  
13 to fix every single thing that I need at the parks. It's  
14 kind of what's a hazard. Those things are what's most  
15 important to me. I don't want anyone to get hurt or injured  
16 on our clock.

17 So while I would love to be able to do that,  
18 accomplish that, I also have to see things that are a  
19 priority here and there.

20 MR. AUSTIN: It's just a suggestion.

21 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I appreciate that.

22 MR. AUSTIN: You get everything tore down and then we  
23 not coming. You got things just like the roads around here.  
24 Everything is tore up. You know what I'm saying.

25 I am just making a comment on that.

MR. GORDON: My question about is the Shiphewana trip.  
So that 25 bucks I think they pay, that includes what?  
Because it costs about 5 bucks to get into the Shiphewana  
Flea Market or whatever.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That is outside. That's really  
for the bus because it's a chartered bus that we're taking.

When we had the senior ladies brunch, what they  
were telling me was we were taking the buses that were not  
air-conditioned as well as had space underneath.

So we had to do what the community asked to make



1 sure we had the spacious bus that had air-conditioning with  
2 space underneath.

3 As well as they asked for us going to the casino.  
4 But I don't know if I have enough money for that.

5 They want Shipshewana. They want the casino. They  
6 want the senior boat trip which that is still happening.

7 We ended up getting I think 80 people that signed  
8 up. I'm sorry. It was 73, 74 people. We had to actually  
9 get another bus because we had so many. We had to turn  
10 seniors away unfortunately.

11 I am proud to say that they're all East Chicago  
12 residents. They came. They wanted it. They're excited  
13 about it. So that's a good thing.

14 But we're trying to give senior trips. They call  
15 us on a regular basis. And I did not have any idea by any  
16 means how much it meant to seniors to be together and the  
17 camaraderie of it.

18 And I talked to my park staff. And we're talking  
19 about doing some bingo in our recreation centers since we're  
20 not receiving the funding for Special Events through the  
21 Council because they're not going to give us the money for  
22 our Seniors on the Lake or possibly our Christmas party that  
23 we have. Like they said can you please just do something so  
24 that we can all get together.

25 And we're trying on a very, very small budget  
unfortunately. And you know we're just trying to do what  
they ask.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Are they going to put a light over there  
by Riley Park by the swings and the exercise equipment?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Like above?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Somewhere one bright light or  
something.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I'll have to go by there and see.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Because it's real, real dark.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I'll have to go by there and see.  
I just noticed the other night the ones at Smith Park, they

1 usually illuminate pretty big, the ones under the shelter.  
2 And you have a shelter that's right next to that. So it  
3 should illuminate that area. But it might be dim like  
4 damaged. So I have to go check that at night.

5 I do know that at Smith Park I just saw the other  
6 day that was dim. So we have a work order put in for that.

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: So you can make them brighter then?

8 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: If you go by Edward Bell, they  
9 have two shelters there. That is probably the brightest  
10 light that I've ever seen out of all the parks. And  
11 Washington Park, their lights are pretty bright too.

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'll check it out. Thank you.

13 MR. GORDON: Are there any other questions or comments?  
14 Thank you.


15 \* Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 13,  
16 2022 @ 5:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers.

17 Motion to adjourn was made by Rick Rodriguez. Second by  
18 Eugene Austin.

19 \* Meeting ended at 5:22 p.m.  
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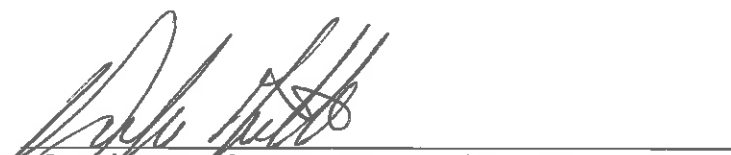
1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of  
2 Tuesday, August 23, 2022  
3 Approved and Signed September 13, 2022

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6 Grayling Gordon, President

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9 Rick Rodriguez, Vice President

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12 Gilberto Cantu, Member

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15 Eugene Austin, Member

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18 ~~Alysia Dunbar~~, Recording Secretary  
19 Debra Gritters


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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, 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 said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 9th day of September, 2022.

  
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Lisa Pena  
Notary Public Porter County  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
License Number 084-003483



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