



SUNRISE PARK AND BEACH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

June 3, 2013

Advisory Committee Members

Geoff Surkamer, Chair

Jill Danly

Pat Falligant

Bill Hermann

Jim Salanty

Tom Terrill

Sophie Twichell

Steve Christensen, Village Trustee

Kevin Considine & Kauri McKendry, Board of Commissioner

Bob Wallace, Board of Commissioner

Ron Salski, Staff Liaison

SUNRISE PARK AND BEACH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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LAKE BLUFF PARK DISTRICT

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June 3, 2013

SUBJECT: FINAL REPORT – SUNRISE PARK AND BEACH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dear Board of Commissioners,

In the Fall of 2009 during an impromptu meeting between Ron Salski & myself, we discussed the road ahead for the Park District and how I can help since my term from the Village Board of Trustees had ended a few months before. We discussed many challenges that faced the Park District and at the time and didn't come to any conclusions about a fit but agreed to think about areas where community volunteerism can prevail.

About a year later, Ron, Jim Salanty and myself met down at the North Shelter one early Saturday morning to discuss the possibilities of putting forth a group of interested community members to make a positive change for the Sunrise Park and Beach. Jim mentioned the Foundation and how they are embracing fund raising campaigns for Park District capital needs.

The concept of creating a team of active and passionate community members who all share the same common vision of seeing through a dream was step one. It was a great opportunity to lead a team, create a vision and give back to the community by improving our greatest asset, the Sunrise Park & Beach.

In 2011, the Park Board approved the formation of an Advisory Committee as the Park District's Strategic Plan developed initiatives to Master Plan Sunrise Park and Beach. The Park Board allowed the Advisory Committee to add Committee Members and make independent recommendations. The Park Board was supportive with including the Village of Lake Bluff in the planning process.

Fast-forward 30 months and the team of Sophie Twichell, Pat Fallagant, Jill Danly, Tom Terrill, Bill Hermann, Jim Salanty and Bob Wallace, worked tirelessly accumulating ideas, prioritizing as a committee, pausing and creating a survey to be distributed throughout the community, distilling the results and communicating the outcomes, over and over and over.

Halfway through the project, we added Steve Christensen as the representative from the Village Board and Kevin Considine as the representative from the Park Board. These two representatives added significant value and knowledge. The team knew it was a big effort yet we didn't want to make the team too large which made Steve and Kevin the right additions.

After many months of survey reviews, many public forums and unlimited feedback from residents, the team has concluded the most optimal plan for improving our greatest asset. The Committee's significant volunteer hours were instrumental with offering the Board of Commissioners a future Sunrise Park and Beach direction. I am privileged to serve this Advisory Committee with such dedicated and knowledgeable Committee Members. It is with great honor that we the Citizens Advisory Committee for Sunrise Park & Beach, respectfully submit for your approval our final recommendations.

We humbly ask for your approval.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey H. Surkamer
Chairman

1.2 ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROFILE

The Board of Commissioners defined a Citizen Advisory Committee and approved forming a Sunrise Park and Beach Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee name and responsibilities evolved over time.

Park District Administration Policy Manual - Citizen Advisory Committee

On June 20, 2011, the Park Board approved a policy to engage residents and the following policies were created.

Community Process

The Lake Bluff Park District is committed to listening and receiving feedback and solutions from residents improving the overall park and recreation system. As projects are established and/or programs/facilities/parks are being improved, renovated or revised, the Park District is committed to open dialogue with residents by determining the appropriate community forum below:

Citizen Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee is defined as a resident Committee focused on planning for a project and/or issue with a two to four year expiration. Members are comprised of no more than nine and an odd number of diverse Park District residents, one Commissioner Liaison, one staff liaison and potentially one intergovernmental liaison based on the project. Members are required to be available limited day and/or evening meetings. A Chairperson is appointed based on past positive Park District experiences and support. Potential members are required to fill out a one page application and members are appointed through board, staff and chairperson recommendations with final approval by the Board of Commissioners. Goals are expected to be developed based on the defined purpose of the committee by the Board of Commissioners.

A Sunrise Park and Beach Advisory Committee was approved and its objective was identified as follows:

Create a citizens advocacy team with a common goal of researching, listening, reviewing and proposing improvements to Sunrise Park & Beach without taxation ramifications.

The Committee's responsibilities were established as set forth below:

- Gather community input and feedback through surveys and meetings.
- Review potential scope of services for Request for Qualifications and Proposals associated with any project.
- Assist with the interviewing of potential consultants/contractors meeting specific objectives/proposals.
- Provide input with consultants/contractors to Full Board.
- Establish monthly or every other month advisory committee reports during the Regular Board Meeting.
- Visit other beach and park sites.

1.3 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Historical Timeline - Recap

- Summer, 2009
 - Park District Community Wide Survey
- January, 2011
 - Park District Strategic Plan
- February, 2011
 - Learn Park & Beach evolution from Cliff Miller & John Shabica
- June, 2011
 - Board of Commissioners adopts Advisory Committee
- September, 2011
 - Meeting with Sunrise Residents
 - Email survey to several thousand Park District constituents

Survey Results

- 851 respondents
- Results were posted on the website by January 30, 2012
- Advisory Committee reviewed and interpreted results/comments by March 6, 2012
 - No surprises
 - The full survey including responses is attached as Exhibit A hereto

Public Forums

- September 2012
 - Public Forum at Sunrise Beach re: Survey Results, Initial Proposals
- November and December 2012 and January 2013
 - Four additional forums on Beach Improvements (2) and Bluff Maintenance and Restoration (2)
- May 2013
 - Public Forum at Golf Tent re: two concept ideas developed by Advisory Committee and Park Board.

1.4 BEACH IMPROVEMENTS FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

What follows is a summary of the Sunrise Beach Improvements desired by the Lake Bluff Park District Community. A separate summary has been prepared with respect to the maintenance and restoration of the Sunrise Park and Beach Bluff. This summary of Beach Improvements comes about following an extensive Park District Community Wide Survey in the summer of 2009, followed by the formation of this Advisory Committee in June 2011. After its formation, the Advisory Committee, in September 2011, met with Sunrise residents and emailed a detailed survey to Park District residents to obtain their thoughts on Sunrise Park and Beach. There were 851 respondents to the survey on Sunrise Park and Beach. Given the uncertainty of the North Shore Sanitary District (NSSD) work that may happen to the South end of the Beach, most of the focus of this summary is concentrated on the areas of the Beach lying to the North of the current NSSD facility, including the Dog Beach.

Results to the survey were posted on the Park District's website by the end of January, 2012. The Advisory Committee reviewed and interpreted these results and comments by the beginning of March 2012. Following this review and interpretation, the Committee, assisted with many volunteers from all areas of the community, had a spring clean-up on the dog beach portion of the beach. Shortly thereafter, Hitchcock Design Group (Bill Inman) produced from the review and interpretation by the committee, a very preliminary estimate of costs associated with the implementation of the improvements.

Armed with this information, the committee held a public forum at the beach on September 15, 2012 to share the review and interpretation with the community. It was determined following this well attended forum that four more community wide forums would be held, two for Beach Improvements and two for Bluff Restoration. By splitting the forums into the two topics (Beach Improvements and Bluff Restoration), it was felt the Committee could obtain more focused responses to both topics.

The two forums on Beach Improvements were held on Thursday evening, November 8, 2012 and Saturday morning, December 1, 2012. The forums were well attended by members from all areas of the Lake Bluff Park District. Throughout this process, Lake Bluff Open Lands Association (LBOLA) was an active and welcomed participant, providing many thoughts and comments. Members of LBOLA attended all of the forums and their comments, along with the residents are incorporated in this summary.

This summary of the Beach Improvements is broken into short-term (11), medium-term (4) and long-term actions (3). Each Improvement is listed, followed by a Consensus Outcome of the comments from all 3 forums. In addition, included are the preliminary cost estimates from Hitchcock Design Group that were provided to the committee prior to any of the forums for context.

IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED

SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS(11)

1. Improve existing restrooms

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** Virtually all stakeholders agreed this was a priority. In general, most wanted to see no enlarging of the current footprint of the current guardhouse/restroom facility. Discussion regarding having a concession stand at the facility was had, but no consensus was reached. Depending on the outcome of NSSD, it was felt a bathroom facility could be explored for incorporation at the South end of the beach in whatever structure the NSSD arrives at.

b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$16,000

2. Signage at Entry Points

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** Current signage is informative but its design is an “embarrassment” to the community. Signage is important, but keep it low key. Develop a scope of design guidelines in concert with the rest of the Park District and the Village of Lake Bluff. A sub-committee was formed with residents who expressed concern and introduced a concept design.

b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$7,000-\$10,000

3. Shower at Dog Beach

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** Concept is good but there were some that questioned the need. In general, it was felt a separate shower from what would be used by people was a good idea, but could a hose apparatus running from the existing guardhouse/restroom facility suffice. Should a permanent structure be decided on, it was clear that concrete used for any base should be kept to a minimum, if needed at all.

b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$6,000

4. Dog Beach Enclosure

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** This involves no change to the existing split rail fence running west to east on the south side of the dog beach, but rather with enclosing the west side of the dog beach from south to north to prohibit dogs from running around current split rail fence and entering the beach where people are. While schematic prepared by Hitchcock Design Group showed a taller metal fence, there was opposition regarding the height and material (wanted new fence to be consistent with existing.) Despite the dialogue around the fence, there was considerable discussion at all the forums about enforcement of keeping dogs in the designated dog beach area.

b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$2,500

5. Recycle Bins Anchored to Concrete Pad

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** In general, a good thing, but do so without the use of concrete pads (Independence Grove has some wood containers that are suspended 6 inches or so from a pole eliminating the need for a concrete pad.)
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$4,500 (including concrete pad)

6. Lighting

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** A great deal of discussion was had on this topic centering on the balance between safety and the need for any lighting at all. It was the general consensus that the existing yellow, high-pressure sodium lights were unattractive. Lower to the ground positioned LED lighting was preferred. Lighting of the road, paths and steps was needed, but minimize lighting everywhere else. Keep lighting off the beach itself was a common desire. Keep light focused down, keep skies dark, develop one consistent color scheme, use organic materials, stone ballards.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Cost:** \$12,000

7. Enclosed Grill, Stone Pedestals & Counters

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** It was the general consensus to keep the existing pedestal design grills, but keep them in working condition and replace as necessary. Add tool racks to design.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$7,500 (for enclosed new stone pedestal grills)

8. Redesign and Reconstruct Stairs to North Shelter

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** There was a general consensus that improvement to existing stairs was needed, but there was a great deal of discussion over ADA compliance issues. Was there a need for a separate, new staircase or could existing staircase be improved. Need handicap accessibility (best solution may be item 9 below.) Minimize any further use of Bluff for stairs. Improve existing. Do not use "Trex" decking, issues with mold problems.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$225,000-\$275,000(for new staircase)

9. John Deere XUV 550S4

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus that this type of vehicle could be a good solution to many of the accessibility issues
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$20,000 (believed to be closer to \$10,000)

10. Beach Accessibility – “Trex” Boardwalk to North Shelter

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General concern over amount of beach committed to concrete or decking. Desire to minimize such. Possible alternative was “hard packing” of sand or matting, removable, seasonal pathways. Concern over “Trex” material as stated above. If implemented, concern over what to do with it during winter months.

11. Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group: \$100,000 (for “Trex” deck boardwalk)

Showers for People

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus was it would be nice to have one at North Shelter, Guardhouse/restroom area, but again, minimize use of concrete pads.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$20,000 for 2 showers

MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS(4)

1. Shade Structures – Framed Cabanas – On a Concrete Pad

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus from forums, despite survey findings was for no permanent shade structures.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$20,000 each

2. Viewing Area From Bluff

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus from forums, despite survey findings was for no structure for the purpose of viewing from the Bluff
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$22,000 for 15'x15' platform

MID-TERM(4) CONT.

3. Replace Entry Road Guardrail

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus was in support of replacement with something more aesthetically appealing.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$70,000

4. Drinking Fountains, New and Renewed

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General consensus was for a couple. “Less is more.” Minimize use of concrete pads.
- b. **Estimated Cost from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$7,000

LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS(3)

1. Maintenance Storage Garage within Boat Storage Area

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** If it can be incorporated within a NSSD facility, no objection. However, to build another structure met with resistance due to the simple concern over diminishing the beach area.
- b. **Estimated Costs from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$20,000 (including 20'x20' concrete pad)

2. Screening for Brick Facade of NSSD Building

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** General thoughts that any kind of vegetative screening would be a good idea. Possible lattice work with vines or other types of plantings.
- b. **Estimated Costs from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$29,000

3. Benches (9) on 10'x5' Concrete Pads

- a. **Consensus Outcome:** A reasonable number of Benches was felt to be a good idea, however, 9 was felt to be too many. More like 6 or so was felt to be adequate. Again, minimizing the amount or size of concrete pads was encouraged.
- b. **Estimated Costs from Hitchcock Design Group:** \$18,000 for 9 benches

While the majority of Improvements presented in the forums were agreed with, there was a consistent theme throughout that “less was more.” Nonetheless, through the process of the survey, where one individual is filling it out in a vacuum, to the interpretation by the committee and the subsequent presentation of that interpretation in the public forums to the Park District residents, a clearer picture or vision, natural beach, has emerged as to what the majority of the Park District residents perceive/want their beach to be.

After considering the foregoing, the Park District distributed 10 requests for proposals to landscape architects to assist in the design of the proposed improvements and received five responses. After considering the proposals submitted, members of the Committee, Park Board and Staff met with all five landscape architects to discuss issues, concepts, designs, visions for the improvements. After these meetings, Upland Design Ltd. was engaged by the Park District to provide a concept design. Upland reviewed the survey and the results, all of the materials from the community forums, powerpoint presentations, recordings of the community forums, and a draft of this report in developing their concept design proposals. Michelle A. Kelly and Maria Sovan of Upland Design met twice with the full Board and the Committee (April 22 and May 6, 2013) and once with just the Committee (April 29, 2013) at meetings open to the public to discuss the foregoing improvements and other ideas proposed by Upland. On May 15, 2013, Upland Design presented two alternative conceptual designs at the Lake Bluff Golf Club Tent, a public meeting seeking input from District residents which was well advertised by the District and well attended by residents of the District. Feedback from that meeting was used by Upland to design a final Sunrise Park Beach and Master Plan.

On June 3, 2013, Upland Design presented to the Committee at an open meeting the final Sunrise Park Beach and Master Plan developed from the input from the community at the prior meeting on May 15, 2013. The Committee provided input and approved Upland's final Sunrise Park Beach and Master Plan near and long term conceptual design for improvements attached as Exhibit B hereto and recommended that the Board adopt the attached plan as the concept master plan design for the Beach and hardscape relating to the Bluff to be implemented over the near and long term.

1.5 BLUFF MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the work as a full Committee as discussed under Sections 1.3 and 1.4 above, the Bluff Subcommittee met numerous times, including site visits, to review the Survey Results, discuss issues and draft the Mission Statement and Guidelines. The Subcommittee also held meetings with Larry McCotter of Lake Bluff Open Lands Association (“LBOLA”) and Cliff Miller of P. Clifford Miller Landscaping Artistry for further understanding of the natural characteristics and historical development of the Bluff and the Beach and the various projects undertaken there. In July 2012, Cliff Miller issued the Sunrise Park and Beach Bluff Vegetative Management Report that is now available on the Park District’s website. Based on the foregoing, the Subcommittee adopted the following Mission Statement and Guidelines, which were approved by the full Committee:

MISSION STATEMENT

Bluffs are a unique and important geologic feature of the North Shore. Lake Bluff seeks to be an excellent steward of this special feature of the Lake Michigan shoreline which gives our community its distinctive character and its name. As such, the management of the bluff above Sunrise Beach will focus on restoring and maintaining the ecological health of the bluff. Restoration activities must be ongoing to ensure the ecological integrity of this special habitat type.

Involvement of community groups and expertise (Lake Bluff Garden Club, Lake Bluff Open Lands Association, Boy Scouts, etc.) in restoration activities is highly encouraged. A consistent focus on removal of invasive species, regular prescribed burns and the encouragement of native trees and herbaceous plants will in our community.

GUIDELINES

Short Term

- Development of detailed 3-5 year plan to jump start the ecological restoration of the bluff.
- Controlled burn of the bluff (at least three years in a row or more initially).
- Remove and herbicide invasive or overgrown understory shrubs and plants (e.g., buckthorn, vines, oriental bittersweet).
- Burn piles of excessive logs and branches from previously cut or downed trees; leave some for habitat.
- Add native plant seed and plugs where needed or desired.
- On some trees, lower branches may be pruned to raise the canopy in order to enhance views.
- Removal of invasive trees (i.e. Norway Maple, Black Locust, etc.).
- Address the emerald ash borer infestation.

Long Term

- Development of a detailed, long-term inventory and maintenance plan for the bluff (and enhanced landscaping opportunities in Sunrise Park) prepared by landscape and restoration professionals (guided by above principles). Maintenance funds must be allocated to execute the plan over the long term. Commitment to bluff plan needs to be established, funded and maintained for continued success.
- Only employ trained arborists or natural resource experts to determine what is to be removed or trimmed in accordance with the plan.
- Lake Bluff residents value views of Lake Michigan. As such, maintenance of bluff health is to be conducted with an eye towards maintaining significant viewing areas (such as those currently on the north and south ends of the bluff), while still respecting the ecological integrity of the bluff. For example, native shrubs (such as Staghorn Sumac) can periodically be trimmed thereby affording lake views.
- Requests from individual homeowners for tree trimming to provide views from their homes will not be accommodated. All bluff maintenance must adhere to the plan.
- Initiate an annual public clean-up and restoration (i.e. planting) day — Lake Bluff Beach and Bluff Day.

In addition to the Community Forum held on September 15, 2012 discussed above, the Subcommittee conducted two additional community forums on December 1, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. and January 15, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Park District Recreation Center, which were well attended by community members from throughout the District. The goals of the Community Forums were to:

- Provide Advisory Committee Background
- Provide an education of Bluff by Cliff Miller
- Provide history of Bluff projects by Lake Bluff Open Lands Assoc. - Larry McCotter
- Gain feedback
- Explain next steps

The public participants generally seemed very supportive of the Mission Statement and Guidelines adopted by the Committee and support enhanced maintenance and restoration of the Bluff, using funds from the Park District budget.

Overall, with respect to Bluff Maintenance and Restoration, the Community members supported the Mission Statement and Guidelines developed by the Subcommittee and approved by the full Committee. P. Clifford Miller Landscape Artistry is developing a Maintenance and Restoration Plan to address these matters that the Committee hopes to approve after input and submit to the Park District Board for approval.

1.6 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As discussed above, as to the improvements, the Committee recommends the adoption by the Board of Upland Design's concept design plan attached as Exhibit B as the concept design for the Beach and Bluff to be implemented over the near and long term. As part of the Master Plan, the Advisory Committee recommends staff present operational and maintenance costs associated with the Master Plan. The Committee recommends continue being transparent and sharing information to the community and Committee about the Master Plan and improvements. The Committee recommends that the Park District seek out short and long term grant and charitable funding, labor and materials as needed to implement the concept design plan and the following bluff maintenance and restorations.

In addition, as to Bluff Maintenance and Restoration, the Committee recommends the following policies and procedures be adopted and actions be taken by the Board:

- Adopt the Committee's Mission Statement and Guidelines as the Bluff Maintenance and Restoration Policies of the Park District.
- Conduct a tree survey using GPS mapping to show where healthy, native trees are located vs. diseased or soon to be diseased ash or non-natives species. This will help show what the Bluff will look like if all ash and non-native species are removed and will help with envisioning view sheds that may be created just through removal of these trees. Can be used as a tool going forward. The three current primary view sheds are to be maintained (north end at Mountain, south end and middle at Center Ave and just north of Center) with secondary view sheds maintained and created by removal of invasive species and infested ash, limbing up of large trees and controlling the understory, with a view towards maintaining the rare full canopy forest found on our Bluff. Significant cutting of native, mature, healthy trees is not contemplated in the near or long term as

significant cutting has occurred over the past 10 years. Areas bordering the view sheds will require new young native tree plantings due to the advanced age of many trees on the Bluff. Openings allowing light on the Bluff and any areas near or under new stairway configurations will need to be aggressively managed to cultivate native plants and eliminate non-native species.

- Adopt and implement a long-term maintenance and restoration plan (the “Plan”) drafted by P. Clifford Miller Landscape Artistry (“PCMA”) in accordance with the foregoing and incorporating the elements of the Mission Statement and Guidelines attached as Exhibit C, recommended by the Committee for approval by the Board; provided, however, that, regardless of any statements to the contrary in the Plan and the Report of PCMA it incorporates by reference, if adopted by the Board, the Plan shall be tiered to, subject to and subordinate to the Mission Statement and Guidelines referenced above as adopted as the Bluff Maintenance and Restoration Policies of the Park District and the other Bluff restoration and maintenance guidelines referenced elsewhere in these recommended actions.
- Fund the maintenance and restoration plan primarily from the operating budget of the Park District on an ongoing, annual basis.
- Initiate a Lake Bluff Beach and Bluff Day to help clean up the beach, assist in bluff maintenance and restoration and increase awareness of our most valuable asset.
- Enlist various community groups such as boy scouts, girl scouts, LBOLA, Garden Club, Indian guides, and local businesses to assist in various initiatives implementing the plan and programming opportunities at the beach and bluff.
- Provide educational opportunities, signage, programming relating to the unique forest and bluff ecosystem we have at the bluff and beach.
- Implement decorative plantings on park table land above the Bluff to welcome residents and visitors to Sunrise Park and Beach and demonstrate the pride, care and stewardship of our community in our common resources.
- Begin the maintenance and restoration plan beginning fall 2013.

* * *

1.7 CONCLUSION

The members of the Committee are willing and would welcome and encourage opportunities to provide ongoing feedback to the full Board as to the implementation of these plans and priorities for improvements, funding and the overall enhancement of the Park District’s greatest asset, the Bluff and the Beach. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in these efforts.