

Park District Partners with City of Wood Dale and State of Illinois on Park Redevelopment

The Wood Dale Park District and the City of Wood Dale have a long history of working together on endeavors that cooperatively benefit Wood Dale and the residents they both serve. In September of 2018, the City Council approved an agreement with the Park District to assist in the funding of the redevelopment of White Oaks Park, a 19 acre site that is owned and managed by the Park District and is under-utilized. In February, it was announced that the Park District would also receive an Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources from the State of Illinois.

The Wood Dale Park District began planning for the redevelopment of White Oaks Park back in 2016, contracting with an architecture firm to prepare a concept plan after soliciting community feedback, and performing multiple land and environmental studies. In 2017, the Park Board presented its full redevelopment plan in a public hearing before the Wood Dale Community Development Commission. After additional community input was received, a revised three-phase plan was approved by the City Council in June and in September 2018. In addition, the City Council agreed to contribute funding to the project, seeing how it would benefit the residents. Following a presentation in Springfield by the Park District's Executive Director, Matthew Ellmann on January 22, grant recipients were announced in early February.

"Community input is the cornerstone of the project," said Executive Director Ellmann. The goals of the project are

- to provide both passive and active features for all ages, abilities and interests to utilize,
- to preserve and enhance open space
- to increase community leisure opportunities, and
- to enhance property values within Wood Dale.

The first phase of the redevelopment began in fall 2018 with the removal of three structures, a cabin, classroom and shed. A new activity and nature building, parking improvements, walking path, landscaping and meadow creation are yet to come, with construction slated to start in a few months. The second phase of the project, which the OSLAD grant applies too, will include the replacement of the picnic shelter, added lawn game courts, a children's discovery playground, scout area, fitness stations, trail improvements and environmental artwork. This grant will allow the second phase of the project to move forward in as early as 2020. The final phase, will consist of the construction of new dog-friendly areas, a reconstructed parking lot, trail improvements and the addition of a Spartan challenge course.

For more information and to view project plans, please visit www.wdparks.org.